

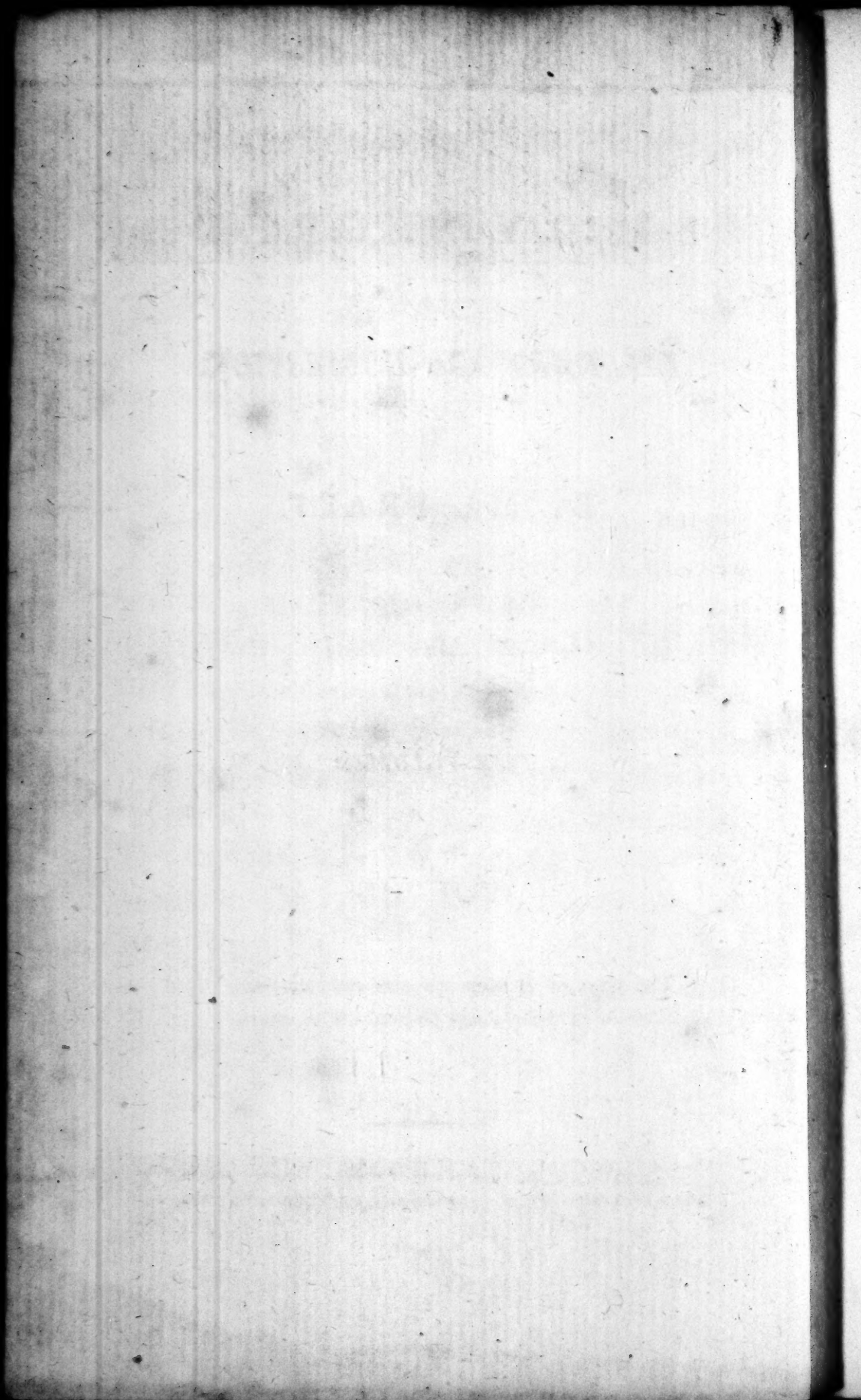
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FAMILY SECRETS,

LITERARY AND DOMESTICK.

BY MR. PRATT.

IN

FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

The ways of Heaven are dark and intricate;
Puzzled in mazes, and perplex'd with errors.

ADDISON.

LONDON:

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1797.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

TO THE

Reverend Mr. POTTER,

PREBENDARY OF NORWICH.

NOTWITHSTANDING the *real* and acknowledged corruptions of the times, and the alarming spirit of depravity, which has, more or less, pervaded all orders or men; in despite, also, of the piteous whine in which hypocrisy affects to bewail, and the cant of those censors, who, with more suspicious vehemence, rave at the state of universal degeneracy;—a writer whose aim it is to illumine written language—which is but the dead letter—by models of existing rectitude, from the living volume, can be at no loss to find such models, even at this day, in every class of society. Indeed, any difficulty of this kind argues the declaimer to be himself destitute of respectable connexions, and to have kept very bad company.

In

In taking a survey of the sacred profession, to give the energy of an example to a rule which is intended to exhibit a man venerable by his years, of the holy order, and of exemplary conduct, save in the frailty that, confessedly, shades his character, a numerous and honourable train will offer itself to the mind of every virtuous reader; and the difficulty will consist only in the variety prescribed for selection. But it will unquestionably be admitted, by the lovers of private virtue, and the admirers of public talents, and by the sacred body of which he has been, for near half a century, a respectable member, that, a MORE pious man, a MORE affectionate friend, a MORE tender parent, or a MORE zealous minister of the protestant faith—unblemished by the infirmities which attach to the character of Sir Armine Fitzorton—could not have been chosen than HE, whose name the author has placed at the head of this division of his work.

CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME THE THIRD.

CHAP. I.

The use and abuse of parental authority.

CHAP. II.

Conflicts of love and duty.

CHAP. III.

The triumphs of duty and love.

CHAP. IV.

Plot and underplot.

CHAP. V.

Its consequence.

CHAP. VI.

Retrospections.

CHAP. VII.

And discoveries.

CHAP. VIII.

Roguery.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. IX.

Stratagems of honour.

CHAP. X.

Transactions above stairs and below.

CHAP. XI.

Effusions of love and pity.

CHAP. XII.

Letters and their effects.

CHAP. XIII.

Resentment and compassion.

CHAP. XIV.

A very tender heart.

CHAP. XV.

Contrasts.

CHAP. XVI.

A house of mourning.

CHAP. XVII.

Gossiping.

CHAP. XVIII.

A house of feasting.

CHAP. XIX.

An affray.

CHAP. XX.

The new lady of the manor.

CONTENTS.

ivii

CHAP. XXI.

Important trifles.

CHAP. XXII.

The last hour.

CHAP. XXIII.

The death of the righteous.

CHAP. XXIV.

Consequent reflections.

CHAP. XXV.

An old man's amity; a young one's love.

CHAP. XXVI.

An embassy.

CHAP. XXVII.

A hint taken.

CHAP. XXVIII.

A disquisition on majesty and meanness of character.

CHAP. XXIX.

An unexpected visit.

CHAP. XXX.

Its consequences.

CHAP. XXXI.

Cruel kindness.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. XXXII.

Consultations.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Another visit.

CHAP. XXXIV.

More discoveries.

CHAP. XXXV.

Meditations.

CHAP. XXXVI.

The cloven foot.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Confessions.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

A nice point.

CHAP. XXXIX.

A great deal of business.

FAMILY SECRETS.

CHAPTER I.

THE Ladies were soon at a fit distance for Sir Armine's purpose. He loitered behind, complained that the relics of the gout still enfeebled him, "And, alas! my beloved, my favorite and most favored son," said he, "I literally stand in need of a support; a dear and tender child is the best crutch on which a parent can lean; it is one which Providence bestowed in the days of his youth, to sustain and to comfort his age."

Here Sir Armine took hold of Henry's arm.

They were both silent for some paces. "Whata reliance is this!" resumed Sir Armine, leaning on Henry; "it is a pillar that sustains the soul as well as the body! At this blest moment I feel myself as firmly *protected* as if the vigour of my own spring-time of life

were returned. The plant I reared repays my care. It is become the most goodly tree of my little garden.”—He paused a moment to press on Henry’s arm yet more forcibly. “And though,” continued he, “I am now grown weaker than the shrub that the next rude blast may level with the dust, this filial support shall prove a better dependance than the branches of the proudest oak! yea, were they formed into crutches lined with the down of the cygnet’s bosom! nay, in the conflict of my last hour, which, you know, my Henry, *cannot* be remote, this prop”—lifting up his son’s wreathed arm to his lips—“shall attemper the storm of death, and give me, on the verge of the world, a foretaste of what awaits an honoured Parent and an expiring Christian in Heaven—a perfect reliance on the *heavenly* Father.”

Henry’s present emotions excited by this discourse annihilated the past; and in remembering he was a son, he even forgot he was a lover. Returning his father’s embraces with tearful rapture, he conjured him, in a voice that the union of love and duty only
can

can inspire—he conjured him to lean the whole weight of that body and of that soul Sir Armine had mentioned entirely upon him.—“The strength of my affection is equal to it all,” said he.

“I believe, hope, and feel it, Henry,” returned Sir Armine, “and the trial that is preparing will but confirm the assertion.—He paused and wept.—The life or death of his father is in the hands of his son! Henry, you must prepare early to-morrow to begin a journey, in company with Mr. Clare, his daughter, and myself: a journey, my son, at the end of which, if youth, beauty, and innocence; if fame, fortune, and love unbounded; if that religion, of which I hope soon to see you—with all humility be it spoken—a worthy minister; if all these, in blessed union, can render a human being happy, you will be the happiest of mankind.”

Henry, upon whom was now forced a remembrance of himself, was about to reply, when Sir Armine, seeing something of resistance and agitation in his air, pressed more eagerly his hand, and said—“Name not to me

your bosom prepossessions. Inasmuch as you conquer them for the sake of what you owe to duty and religion, that is, to me and to God, you will be meritorious. The matter lies in a narrow compass," continued Sir Armine, raising his voice awfully, and dropping Henry's hand—"you selfishly unite yourself to the daughter of your father's enemy; ENEMY to his person, family, and faith, whatever gloss he may, I fear for no virtuous reason, now put upon it, or to the daughter of your father's FRIEND, in all things that can give a title to that sacred character: and in one word, instead of my dying thanks, my expiring reproaches will attend you as your determination prospers or opposes this great object of my bane or blessing. It is superfluous for me to say more; and I will expect your answer in your conduct, not your words. With me, when my opinion is formed, they are only waste of time, you know."

Without waiting for reply of any kind, Sir Armine hastened, unsupported, to the castle, dreading more the pain of a speech that might thwart his favourite purpose, than the pangs of
of

of his gout ; or, perhaps, he lost the sense of the latter in the greater apprehension of the former.

They were indeed within a few paces of the castle, as Henry was ascending, in disordered silence, the steps at which Olivia and Lady Fitzorton presented themselves to view. The former had tript down the long flight of stairs to give her arm to Sir Armine ; and as she was conducting the old gentleman in this manner, Henry took notice of a circumstance, which added, not a little, to his confusion. He perceived that Olivia had quitted her mourning, and was, for the first time since the death of a relation of the family, in colours. Lady Fitzorton perceiving he observed this, whispered to him to follow the example, since the white hours, said she, blessed be God ! are at last returned. Well might he have replied in the language of Hamlet—

“ 'Tis not alone this inky cloak, good mother,
“ Nor customary suits of solemn black,
“ That can denote me truly.”

The embarrassment, however, of any reply was taken off by the appearance of the good

old Mr. Clare, who coming up to Henry, with an air and aspect of ineffable benignity, exclaimed, but it was plain to be seen he had been weeping, "At length, Henry, I am about to entrust you with a treasure, which, were I not assured you know how to prize even according to its value, I would not, for all the wealth of all the worlds that pay homage to their god below or above, put you in possession of! But, at present, I must borrow her a few minutes even from you, having occasion for her services."

Olivia and her father left the room. Henry's heart seemed ready to burst with variety of agonies suppressed, and uttering a terrifying groan, he flung himself first into a chair, and then at Sir Armine's feet, passionately embracing his knees with one hand, and Lady Fitzorton's arm with the other.

His parents raised him from his prostrate posture, and each taking hold of him—"Son," said Sir Armine, "nothing truly great or noble was ever done without exertion. The sublime duties demand, and deserve it. You are trusted with all my motives. You are in the
confidence

confidence of my situation: a confidence denied to the rest of my children—for I have neither told John nor James of my misfortune, nor of the generosity that removed it. To you I would owe the re-establishment of your family! After the appeals which have been made to your conscience on the points of filial Duty and Religion, it were needless to add more reasons for your ready obedience; but I am this day permitted to inform you that Sir Rowland Firtzorton, allied equally to our family and to that of the Clares, has left the Adsell estate, which yields seven thousand pounds a year, to Olivia, on condition *only* of her marrying one of our name and blood; and the fortune goes out of both families to public uses, specified in his whimsical will, in case she fulfils not the obligation. By way of generous surprise to your heart, which she has all along believed wanted no inducement in its love, it has been Olivia's prayer to her father, that this circumstance should be reserved to the hour at which the day of marriage might be fixed; and though my friend and I have faithfully kept promise,

it has been with much difficulty she has adhered to her own resolves, on the idea of its being cruel to withhold from you any good.” —“Generous even to cruelty!” sighed Henry.

“Amongst other singularities of the testator, he has stipulated,” resumed Sir Armine, “to have the marriage ceremony—for shame, my son, be more firm, at what do you tremble? to have, I say, the marriage ceremony performed at the altar of the chapel where he himself was united to his Lady, and that the wedding should be kept holy in the room which was his own bridal apartment, giving, as a reason for this, a superstitious, but yet tender prophecy, that the young couple would be the happier from celebrating their nuptials in the place which confirmed his own felicity with the loveliest and best of women.”

“Surely, my beloved child,” said Lady Fitz-orton, gently pressing his hand to her bosom, “these accumulated motives might reconcile a heart like yours to forego a partiality, which, whatever may be the merit of the object, neither duty to your parents, your friends, nor yourself, permits you to cherish; I might have

have added, duty to your God ; for though you have of late neglected all offices, all studies, you cannot but feel that a sacred profession should again be cultivated."

Sir Armine perceiving Henry still agitated, and divided what part to take, his embraces testifying the desire he had to obey, and his tears manifesting his passion for Caroline ; "Henry," said Sir Armine, "no good man *can* be miserable with Olivia Clare ! and no good man, under like circumstances, could be happy with Caroline Stuart !"

Henry still shuddered at the name, and he seemed to think, that if it was intended he should profit by good counsel, this was not a time to couple Olivia with Caroline in any admonition.

Sir Armine pointed to Lady Fitzorton, and said, "Behold an illustrious example for you to follow. This beloved woman was the object of my affectionate esteem, not of my youthful enthusiasm. A great and commanding duty first united me ; I did not romantically love, but I did more. I revered, I honoured ; on that honour, that reverence, I made her my

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wife ;

wife; since which, more than half a century has gone smiling by, and in all that time, she has been as my own soul. Henry, prove yourself worthy of us. Make us proud—or, farther outstripping us in the glorious career of filial piety—humble thy father and thy mother, which the Lord thy God has given thee.”

He led Lady Fitzorton out of the apartment, saying to her—“Madam, the honour and happiness of your family is safe. To-morrow will our filial preserver prepare his hand and his heart.”

“To-morrow, Sir! Good Heaven!” questioned and ejaculated Henry, and once more he fell at his father’s feet; but Sir Armine, disengaging from his embrace, hurried away, firmly saying to Lady Fitzorton—“There is but a moment on this side my destruction and your favourite son’s disgrace, Madam: if you would prevent both, assist me in making our escape.” Then, turning to Henry, he exclaimed—“To-morrow, at six o’clock of the morning, I shall find my son prepared!”

CHAP. II.

“ Pale as the ghost, that by the gleaming moon
“ Withdraws the curtains of the murderer’s bed,
“ So pale, and cold at heart, he look’d around !”

SUCH was precisely the situation of Henry. He sat for some time motionless, then attempted to examine his condition. There is scarce an emotion of which the human heart is capable, but took its turn to tyrannize. At one time, his distempered fancy painted the ruin, and even the poverty of his parents, brought about by the indulgence of his fatal passion. He thought he saw them stretched on their dying beds, with their last breath accusing him as the cause of their destruction. His filial heart shrunk as from the crime of parricide. He resolved, in that afflicting moment, to sacrifice his love to his duty; but in the next instant his imagination suggesting his vows to Caroline, and the miseries he should entail on himself, and perhaps on the innocent Olivia, made that offence more foul to his soul than the most deter-

mined disobedience. "This," cried he, smiting his breast, "would be worse than self-murder—worse than that impiety, against which the ' Omnipotent has set his seal.' Alas, Caroline! though Fortune were to remain my cruel persecutor for years to come, should not this hand be reserved even to the end of life for thee; and were it never permitted to be united to thine, could my devoted heart, my violated conscience, offer it to another without treason to honour, to tenderness, and to truth! And, least of all, can I present it to thy brother's adored Olivia! Does filial duty require me to violate the sacred laws of Love and Friendship? Shame on such virtue! It is unnatural. I renounce it!"

In the midst of these struggles he retired to his chamber, whither he was accompanied by True George, who, seeing his master agitated, and thinking rest would be the most likely means of restoring him, began, as usual, to assist him. He intreated his Honour would please to go to bed; observing, that a little sleep would do him good.—"Sleep!" exclaimed Henry, throwing himself on the bed; "O that
it

it were my everlasting one!"—The poor fellow shook at hearing this ejaculation, accompanied as it was with the most extravagant voice and gesture, as if his own last hour had been at hand.—"George," cried Henry, "thou art, thou hast been proved faithful, and of that fidelity I must now make another trial." The countenance of the honest domestic brightened in an instant, and without losing any time in professions, or offers of service, except by giving assent at almost every word his master uttered, he stood eagerly waiting for the word of command.—"My dear parents," continued Henry, "are going to make me the most infamous and miserable of human kind; my brothers, my whole family, and even the Clares, are in the plot against my peace. I have no dependance, no hope, but from thee!"—George's whole frame quivered with impatience.—"To-morrow I am, by their joint contrivance, to be ruined; to-morrow they have determined I shall break my most sacred promises, my most solemn oaths; to-morrow, therefore, my heart also will be broken, if I am not preserved from the impending stroke
to-

to-night!"—George traversed the room at a stride, and ejaculated, "To-morrow, to-night! to-night, to-morrow!"—A case of pistols hung over the chimney-piece in Henry's chamber; and George, as if by an involuntary impulse, hastily took them down, and held one in each trembling hand, intimating, though he spoke not a word, that he was now doubly armed, and only wanted the orders of his superior to shoot any body and every body through the head, that should stand in the way of effecting his master's escape from this terrifying catalogue of ills.

"O Heavens!" cried Henry, at the unexpected sight of the pistols. An often suggested and desperate idea seemed to resume its dominion.—"Gracious Heaven! I thank thee, good fellow, for the hint."—"The hint, Sir?" questioned the trembling George—"what hint?" "Alas!" exclaimed Henry; "how many easy ways are there of escaping the tyranny of friends or foes! By the help of one of these friendly instruments," continued he, catching suddenly at one of the pistols, "I might, in one moment, avoid, perhaps, a long life of misery!"—"But what

what will become of you after?" cried George. "And can this be a crime?" resumed Henry. "A terrible one, your honour," interposed George; "the Lord gives, and the Lord only can take away."—"Or," continued Henry, not attending, "if a crime, can it be so atrocious, so immitigable, so beyond God's forgiveness or man's salvation, as that which prostitutes for gold the sanctity of the most solemn vows made in the presence of that God, and falsify the most awful engagements? If both are evils, both iniquities; is not that the least, which, to prevent the ruin of *many*, destroys but one?"

While Henry was entering into the latter part of this self-debate, too often discussed in the same way, George, who still trembled from head to foot, substituted action for words, by wrenching the pistol from his hand, and disappearing amidst a profusion of bows. Henry had scarce time to reflect on what had been done, before George came again bowing into the apartment, without any deadly weapon, and making a number of silent apologies for the liberty he had taken; at length, perceiv-

ing a frown gathering on his master's brow—
“I hope your honour will not be offended at my obeying your honour's commands.”—
“Disobeying them, you mean,” answered Henry.—“No,” replied George, “you told me you should be ruined to-morrow, if not preserved to-night. Providence sent me to your honour's assistance; for I don't see how a man is to ruin himself, if another man takes out of his hand all *ruinating* weapons; at least he must thereby get time to think better of it; so you may now go into a comfortable bed, and to-morrow may come as soon as God pleases to give it us. Blessed be the name of the Lord!”

The fervid devotion and humility with which George uttered this, bowing his head and folding his hands each time he spoke that name, which claims the reverence of all creation, disarmed the rising resentment of Henry, who extended his hand in testimony of forgiveness, and seeming to acquiesce in what had been said, went to his chamber, and desired to be left to his repose. George, who was now eased of his terrible apprehensions, departed;

departed; but the poor fellow returning on tiptoe, and gently opening the door, about an hour after, to see that all was well, having perhaps still some fears, found Henry had risen from his bed, and by the glimmering light of the lamp had been writing a letter. He was folding it up as George came in. "This is the trial I spoke of, George," said Henry, as he wafered the letter. "It is to Lieutenant Stuart, and requires an immediate reply. He is at the abbey. Dennison will take it to his apartment; and as the old man, you know, sleeps apart from the family, it may be managed without alarm."

The latter part of these directions were lost in air; for George was at the bottom of the stairs, and making his rapid way, but with inaudible steps, to the street-door, before they were uttered, setting off at full speed with the words—*immediate reply*.

Henry now betook himself again to his bed; but it might be truly said, Caroline had "murdered sleep;" or rather, she, in combination with many more, conspired to banish that lenient power from shedding balms on
his

his pillow. The morrow began to dawn, and he anticipated all the horrors of a marriage, into which even tender parents plunged him; and while they knew his heart to be utterly averse, and on which, therefore, a train of mischiefs threatened to attend their beloved, their favourite son, and his posterity, "even to the last syllable of recorded time." The motives of the parents were undoubtedly manifold and mighty; but the single objection of the child, declared, and unshaken by all those motives, each of which he felt and acknowledged, should, at least, have reserved to him the right of withholding his hand from an object of his indifference, if it could not be given to that of his choice. Yet how many, in all other respects excellent parents, are there, who refuse the darlings of their hearts this comparatively happy alternative! Should any of this description peruse these annals, let the natural consequences of similar error prevent them from carrying their designs into effect.

CHAP. III.

WHILE the intended victim of the Fitz-ortons was anticipating the sacrifice of all his happiness, how differently passed away the hours in the apartments of Olivia!—Virtuous love, in like circumstances, has ten thousand times been felt by virtuous women, but has never, perhaps, been described even by themselves without an injury to that feeling. And, indeed, the combined sensations of love, firmly believed to be fondly reciprocated, of innocent passion, and of virgin modesty, seem too bold for the contracted powers of language;—the language of love itself. The truly amiable young creature, whom the Reader, long ere this, we trust, both loves and pities by turns, experienced the sweet *reverse* of all those bitter emotions which were afflicting the mind of her beloved Henry.

As the clock struck five, she rose. It was in verity an April morn, both of life and nature. Olivia smiled and wept; and the element showered and shone at the same moment.

ment. The summons of preparation was con-
signed to Jenny Atwood, whom gratitude and
her own disappointed, but alas ! not har-
dened heart, kept wakeful. On entering the
apartment, she found Olivia almost dressed.
They greeted each other kindly, but on
Olivia's face had settled one of the tears, and
another, in its "crystal source," stood ready;
yet her cheeks glowed, and her eye looked
the more bright from the lustre of that pre-
cious drop, but it trembled like early dew
upon the rose-bud glistening in a sun-beam.

Meantime, the unfortunate Henry was still
tossing on the bed, sometimes traversing the
room, and sometimes in a profound reverie,
debating, but unable to determine, what course
he should take. At one time he resolved to
yield himself up the victim of filial piety, and
prepare for the ceremony ; at another, he re-
jected this idea with disdain, and resolved to
abscond, attended only by True George. He
even formed the outline of a plan to carry off
Caroline by force, and gain over Charles to
the conspiracy, that Olivia might make her
escape at the same time ; by which stratagem,
his

his disordered fancy represented the happiness of both himself and friend, each possessing the object of his affection. But this thought was presently abandoned, as the height of impracticability and of madness. In the midst of these conflicts, he heard, with horror, the striking of that very clock whose sound vibrated the tenderest joys to the bosom of Olivia. It announced the sixth hour. Terrible was it to his ear, as if it had been the knell of a friend's death! To Olivia, it was the music of the sphere. Resolving and re-resolving, but still unresolved, he rose abruptly, packed and unpacked, filled and emptied a trunk several times, and after having, at length, determined to hazard temporal and eternal misery, rather than prostitute his heart by yielding a reluctant, alienated, betrothed hand, be the consequence what it might—here he pressed Caroline's miniature, with almost a convulsed emotion, to his bosom—he sat down with the composure which a man always feels, when, after deep agitation, his fluctuating opinions become fixed. But this calm lasted only while
his

his imagination again took wing, which was in the succeeding moment.

At this crisis the faithful George returned from the abbey almost breathless with haste; and informed Henry, that the Lieutenant had left the abbey within an hour after his honour; that he set off without any servant, and left word for his sister, that he should not return till late in the next day.—“Left the abbey,” exclaimed Henry, “so sudden! Did you see Dennison?” “O yes, your honour, and I know not what is the matter; but I—I fear from the young ’Squire’s setting off in the night-time, all alone, some harsh words have passed between the old gentleman and his honour; for Sir Guise is gone too.” Before Henry could reply to this extraordinary intelligence, a messenger, on horseback, desired to speak to True George, who setting off at full speed, presently returned at full speed also, and delivered a packet to his master, saying—“I understand it is from the Lieutenant, Sir: the horse that brought it is all in a foam.”

“To

“ To Henry Fitzorton, Esq.

“ Seeing, O my beloved friend! we are both hovering on the extremest verge of destruction, I have been some hours on my horse, to prevent a marriage which, if *not* prevented, will be the precipice that must overwhelm us both into instant ruin. Henry, beware! Let nothing urge you to an action which will heap havoc and horror on both, and on all that belong to us. The secret of your love of my sister must one day or another reach the ear and pierce the heart of Olivia. I have reflected, and find it is neither duty, honour, love, friendship, nor religion, to make your friend, yourself, the woman you love, and even the woman you wed, *irreparably miserable*. It is the false doctrine of your father's prejudice, not of his good mind and fine understanding—not even of his nature or his faith; and it will be virtue in you to save both him and yourself. You have no alternative but flight—*instant flight!* Something may happen in your absence favourable to all our loves; at any rate, the prevention of your marriage with Olivia will be an almighty

mighty blessing, since it must avert an omnipotent curse—the curse of loathing her you must swear to love. I have, by the assistance of a friend, devised a way to make your flight look like a matter of necessity. But the detail would take up the precious moments. Thinking me, therefore, as your guardian friend, attend to my instructions. Proceed in your preparations—be ready at your father's call—seem to enter into the *spirit* of his views—begin the dreadful destined journey with alacrity, and at the edge of Adsell Forest, which you must necessarily pass in your way to the hall, expect to meet a DELIVERER !”

So great was Henry's perturbation on reading this, that though he ordered True George to prepare every thing, without knowing he spoke, and dressed with all possible dispatch; and though he determined to follow his friend's advice, he was by no means in a state of mind to conjecture, or indeed to connect thought on what could be intended by the promise of deliverance. The very idea, however, of escaping a marriage with Olivia, and of the bare possibility of reserving
his

his hand for Caroline, gave him such alacrity in preparation, that he was the first of the groupe to salute the intended bride, whom he met, arrayed in those bridal vestments which Lady Fitzorton's assiduity and taste had prepared. At the sight of her now almost husband, she was covered from her forehead to her bosom with the true "rosy red" of native modesty, and might literally be said to blush and breathe ten thousand graces. Lady Fitzorton, and both the fathers, had bestirred themselves, and were bustling to get the carriages to the door. Henry, animated by the hope which his friend Charles had inspired, had assumed, all at once, so vivid an appearance, not only from that hope, but from the flush of hurrying employments and emotions, that Sir Armine thought his parting words had taken effect. Lady Fitzorton wept, and Mr. Clare forgot his age, and danced for joy. For Olivia's felicity there are no words; and if it was still dressed "like April's suns in showers," it was thence only the more bright and delicious.

CHAP. VIII.

As the carriages were driving up, Mr. Partington, to the surprise of the whole party, rode up on the full gallop. "Why, heydey! you abominable good-for-nothing rascals!" said he, addressing them all; "and so you thought to have stolen not only a march but a match upon me, without knowing whether I forbid the banns, or give consent, did you? But I was not," added he, in the same pleasant vein, "to be outgeneralled by a parcel of shallow vagabonds like you. My trusty scouts apprised me of your operations, and brought me a full account of the enemy's motions long before the official letters of Father Fitzorton arrived at head-quarters. But, to shew that I do not mean to punish you for disobeying orders, I will be so far from intercepting you in your expedition, that I propose to be your leader, and now give you the word of command to proceed on your march like a pack of sad poltroons, as you are. To the right about! Make ready! March! Fire away!—at full trot—you sorry, fore-footed caitiffs!" rejoined he,

he, turning round the horses' heads with one hand, and performing part of the military exercise with the other—the huge crabstick with which he always rode or walked serving him for a musket.

The company, accustomed to his mode of address, took all in good part, and were made happy at the unexpected rencontre. Henry performed the honour of assisting the ladies to their carriages, with an agility which was still mistaken by some present for the impatience of a lover's tenderness; and having made his bow to Lady Fitzorton and Olivia, he ordered the postillion to drive on, observing, that he and Mr. Partington would lead the way.

“Now, that is as it should be; so off we go, infantry and cavalry, to besiege your grandfather's, old Sir Rowland's, castle—hey, my boy!” exclaimed the bustling Partington, who appeared to be as well instructed, and as much interested in the conduct, motives, and dispatch of the journey, as if he only had the ordering of the arrangements, had fixed the day, and was going himself to be married to Olivia.

The party in motion consisted of Sir Armine and his Lady, Olivia and Mr. Clare in the family coach, followed by Jenny Atwood and True George, in the post chariot, at Olivia's particular request; Partington and Henry on horseback; a suit of domestics following. In this order they set forward, on one of the loveliest mornings of the loveliest part of the year, and all appeared in spirits suitable to the occasion.

They purposed dividing the journey into two equal parts; stopping to rest, the first night, at Adsell, where they had previously bespoke accommodations at an excellent inn on the western road; and to reach the priory early enough on the second day to finish the great object of their tour.

Nothing worthy to be recorded in this history took place till, almost after the whole of the first day's travel, they arrived at the skirts of the forest bordering on the village of Adsell, when, just as they were descending a deep valley, enriched by a stream that took its way through the woods, Partington exclaimed, jocosely—"Now, if we have any of

us our deserts, we shall be plundered by some of the robbers that infest this part of the forest! to prevent which," added he, "as the night draws on, and that pale-faced hussy, the moon, holds a dark lanthorn to the honest gentlemen of the bullet, aiding and abetting, rather than discovering them, let us push on till we get clear of this plaguy wilderness, which is absolutely an encouragement to the amiable associates of the halter." Rather in sport than in apprehension, Henry humoured his whimsical fellow-traveller; and they had not proceeded above a couple of hundred paces farther, ere Partington, checking his own horse, and pulling the rein of Henry's, cried out, "Wo-ho—stop, you abominable good-for-nothing vagabond, we are just at the spot where you are to be robbed, stripped, murdered, and ravished!—Let me see;—Aye! this is the very place. Prepare yourself; your time is come."—He had scarce uttered this, when four stout men on foot, preceded by one on horseback, with vizors on their faces, rushed from behind a cluster of thick elms that, forming an angle, came jut-

ting into the road. They surrounded Henry, crying out—"Yield, you are amongst *friends!*"—The horseman now came up to Henry, and taking off his vizor, exclaimed, "Behold one of your DELIVERERS!"—"Charles Stuart!" exclaimed Henry.—"Yes," said Partington, "my plot is now mature; you are to be delivered—delivered, I find, from a forced marriage!—I will allow no scoundrel to force another. But we must wait the arrival of the coach, because it is necessary the old gentleman should see you carried off. You may as well seem to resist a little though, and I will appear to help you—but we must both cleverly suffer ourselves to be overcome—and while I am making my escape, with proper difficulty, you shall be carried to a place of safety—namely, to my own house, where I desire you will remain a close prisoner." Partington conducted the whole of this attack with too much rapidity to admit of more than silent surprise—but at this moment a violent shriek arrested the general attention. "Hey-dey!" cried Partington, seeing the coach surrounded by armed men, and even some of the company dragged out,

out, "here are more rogues than we bargained for, Stuart." Hereupon, setting spurs to his horse, and ordering the men to follow, bludgeons in hand, Henry, and the first body of assailants, with Charles at their head, were hastening to inquire into the designs of the second, which were soon discovered to be of a far more hostile nature. For, notwithstanding the dispatch of Partington, and his cohort, the villains had burst open the door of the carriage, and while the women were trembling and beseeching mercy, two of the banditti were belabouring Sir Armine and Mr. Clare with bludgeons, which would soon have put an end to their existence, had not Partington, Henry, and the masked men, one with the fury of an old, and the rest of two young lions, assisted in their rescue. But this was not effected before Sir Armine, who received a blow in his temple after he was otherwise much hurt, had fallen on the ground. While Henry and Partington were endeavouring to raise him up, the rest were employed in pursuing and securing the ruffians. True George had fastened upon the collar of one, and the

neck of another was nailed to the earth by his feet. The villain that was observed to strike Sir Armine after he was on the ground, was the prize of the victorious Charles, who, considering him as devoid even of the common compassion of an highwayman, in treating a venerable and helpless man with so much barbarity, returned every blow he had inflicted on Sir Armine with tenfold interest. Nor were Partington and True George's myrmidons less liberal in *their* rewards of the rest of the banditti, which consisted of two persons besides those in George's custody.

By this time the tender and assiduous Henry, who totally forgot all idea of his own escape in the apprehension and terror he felt for others, had so far composed the ladies, that he was at liberty to assist in lifting Mr. Clare and Sir Armine, who were both wounded, into the carriage. Meantime, the victors pursued their triumphant blows over the vanquished: but villainy, though done "i'th' centre," will speak, and great discoveries are brought about by slender means. Little Fitz, who, in the general ransack of the company,

pany, had left the coach, and was too active a spectator to remount, ran to the person whom Jonathan Armstrong was putting an end to, and expressed more signs of sympathy than a stranger and a ruffian had a right to claim.—Fitz, however, either from indignation or some other motive, leaped on the personage above described; and the moon coming from under her cloud, what could equal the surprise and consternation of the whole company, when, in prosecuting their chastisement, one of George's captives turned out to be the infamous David Otley, Sir Armine's favourite servant, who had been trusted with ordering the accommodations at Adsell, and who was supposed to be still in waiting there to receive the family; the other, Mr. Valentine Miles! and, to complete the climax of astonishment, the personage under the severe discipline of Jonathan, about whose fate or destruction, little Fitz appeared to be so interested, proved to be Sir Guise Stuart!—while Valentine Miles had been the victim of Henry and Charles alternately! These extraordinary discoveries were made so near to

the coach, that every body within, capable of sight or speech, exclaimed, "How! Sir Guise Stuart! David Otley! Valentine Miles!" —Sir Armine alone wanted power to know the prime offender, being utterly stunned by the back-handed stroke he received from that implacable wretch.

CHAP. IX.

THE rage, grief, and shame of the ingenuous Charles at this detection is not to be described: it was insupportable to him—and giving way to a resentment which shook his frame almost to dissolution, and annihilated all sense of affinity, he addressed the trembling Sir Guise with an oath, by which he swore, that he would see justice executed upon him, and be himself his principal evidence, even though the public disgrace of an ignominious death should be the consequence. "O thou ——— polluter of a family which never knew a stain, till in an evil hour its honour was committed to thy charge, for what sin, committed or yet to be perpetrated, am I condemned to think the life which thou
hast

hast dishonoured was bestowed by thee?—As for you, wretch!” said he, turning to Miles, “and thou, his meanest instrument, if my correction towards thee knows any bounds, it is only in the hope that the residue of your punishment will be more sure and exemplary in the hands of my country, than in those of an individual. I require, Mr. Partington, that you and your friends assist in conducting these offenders to the next town, where they shall remain close prisoners till I can properly dispose them; and do not think, abandoned assassins, the names of son or father, from which my soul alive, as it would be to every deserving tie, turns with horror, shall screen ye from the insulted laws of your country or your God!” Partington, who deemed this no time for discourse, proceeded to immediate action: he therefore arranged his men, and placed his prisoners in the midst of them, in the manner of deserters, taken up and moving to a court-martial. He then took the lead, and desired Charles to guard and bring up the rear.

In this manner was the long-fostered revenge of Sir Guise and his mercenaries defeated by the very persons whom his amiable but unhappy son had convened to rescue his friend from a forced marriage.

The escort of prisoners arrived at Adsell, which was about two miles from the place of attack, sooner than the coach; but the indefatigable George and his colleagues, which were no other than Jerom and his cousin Jonathan, for Henry had never left the side of the coach, had rode at full speed, and had brought a rural surgeon to the inn-gate, where he waited the coming of the carriage. The inn-yard, and street adjoining, were soon crowded with spectators; for, besides that, George had given the alarm, village curiosity, who had the eyes of Argus, opened all her visual powers to see the wonderful phænomena of a gang of ruffians, who always afford an holiday to the vulgar, as well when they are taken to prison, as when they are sent out of the world.

More than an hour elapsed in arranging the two different parties, in separate apartments,

ments, which were with difficulty procured; for David Otley had attended only to the accommodations at the forest, and neglected those he was to have prepared at the inn, which having much company, who purposed staying all night, the hostess was driven to her best management to provide beds, even for Mr. Clare, her landlord, and his friends. As to Sir Guise Stuart, and his fellow assassins, Mr. Partington and Charles disposed of them with very little apparatus, in convenient out-houses adjoining, where they were put without ceremony, under lock and key, and the trusty George set over as guard, relieved occasionally by Jonathan or Jerom.

With equal politeness and humanity, however, the party that occupied the best apartments hearing that a gentleman and his family were brought in wounded by assassins, whom they had taken, offered to resign their claims as first-comers, and to mount or descend into whatever sleeping-rooms the landlady could provide for them. By this civility Sir Armine was accommodated with a comfortable suite
of

of rooms, where he might be surrounded by Olivia, Lady Fitzorton, Henry, Jenny Atwood, and his attendants.

He was no sooner put into a warm bed, than the surgeon, who, contrary to what books usually represent gentlemen of the faculty resident in the country to be, was a skilful and sensible man, desired to be left alone with the patient, whom he immediately bled; and, finding the bruises less violent than he at first suspected, gently fomented the parts affected with a suitable embrocation; then, administering an anodyne, assured the company they would shew their affection in the most essential manner by leaving the patient to repose; “after which,” said the surgeon, “I do not doubt but we shall find him materially refreshed:”—And promising to call again before bedtime, and to attend early in the morning, he bowed and took his leave.

Somewhat comforted by this favourable report, the shattered party had leisure and spirits to inquire about each other. Mr. Clare felt himself much recovered, having escaped with only two or three blows, and those

those on no vital part. Olivia and Lady Fitzorton, who had suffered only in sympathy for the sufferings of others, and from the natural terrors of so sudden an attack, seemed to revive in proportion as Mr. Clare and Sir Armine were pronounced to be out of danger. Henry could not be prevailed on to quit Sir Armine's bedside, at which, begging his mother to sleep in another apartment with Olivia, he kept watch the whole night. On the return of the good surgeon, finding the favourable symptoms continue, the rest of the party felt themselves sufficiently at their ease to take some slight refreshment; and after each had paid a tiptoed visit to the chamber of Sir Armine, whom the vigilant Henry signified, rather by gestures than by speech, to be in a dose, they withdrew to their apartments in order to follow so good an example.

It should not be omitted, to the honour of his race, that little Fitz, whose various good actions entitle him to be now considered as a personage of some consequence in this history, kept watch over Sir Armine at the feet of Henry; and, except that on the entrance

trance of Olivia, whose passing caresses he acknowledged, he remained there till the morning.

CHAP. X.

HAVING thus disposed of the several characters at the inn in the best manner that the circumstances admitted, it seems a fit opportunity to settle a running account, not only with historic consistency, in regard to the causes which gave rise to all this mischief, but to acquit ourselves of the claim which is so infinitely due to John Fitzorton. We left that singular young man sitting down to the pleasing and painful task of finishing his drawing of Olivia Clare. He had just taken his pencil from retouching the well-imitated features, over which he heaved many a sigh, when Lieutenant Stuart was announced. John rose and ran to the door with expanded arms to receive him; but willing to pass over the subject of his promotion, which he knew might lead to what would disconcert the amicable convention settled betwixt him and Henry on that matter, he exclaimed, "I am apprised,

apprised, my good Charles, of all that gives me the sincere satisfaction of seeing you, and having you amongst us; but, as I see a great deal of your enthusiastic friend Henry is mounting into your face, I must cut short all unnecessary effusions. At a word, I think you do honour to any man's election, and I wish you the farther promotion you merit with all my heart. Are you come to remain with us now altogether?"—"No," replied Charles, "I have some affairs to adjust at home before I can have the honour of associating, but thought it a first duty to make my bow to my new Captain and Colonel, *en passant*." "Then you are just in time to take letters for me to the castle; and may I trouble you to convey a small parcel to our Olivia."—"Our Olivia!" cried Charles, reddening; "Ah! Captain Fitzorton, you know not how far nor through what perils I would go, had I a thousand lives at stake, to render the most trifling service to that dear angelic girl!" "Indeed!" said John, employing all the powers of his scrutinizing eyes upon Charles's face, as if at the first idea of a new discovery—"Indeed!"

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There are moments, it is well known, which defeat the circumspection of years. This was one of them. At the time, Charles intended nothing less than the unfolding of his heart to John; neither was there any thing in the occasion itself that should draw forth his confession; so we can only suppose this was to be the period, according to the predestinarians in love, ordained by the god of that passion or the goddess of Fortune, for John Fitzorton to become acquainted with *another* of Olivia's military admirers. The steady gaze with which John pursued his object, deepened the tacit declaration in the cheek of Charles, and either by reflection, or by some other course, John felt an uncommon glow in his own countenance. On the repetition of the ejaculatory word, *indeed!* Charles found out that he had betrayed himself, and became yet more embarrassed: John was discomposed, and each continued to confuse the other; till both sought relief by turning their eyes another way. John, who of all men was the most sensible of shame, and who the most laboured with self-reproach,

soon

soon left the room, and gave Charles opportunity for one of those painful soliloquies which usually burst from a man after he has discovered the secret he would conceal.

“And have I,” said he, “after cautiously guarding the cruel secret in my own tormented breast, and after we had agreed so to shut up the fatal secret till happier times—perhaps for ever—have I divulged it to the man who, of all the Fitzorton family, would be the least likely to forgive my passion? even to John? who, noble-natured as he is, will consider my unfortunate attachment to Olivia—for, am I not a son of the offending Sir Guise?—as the height of madness and presumption—nay more, I must appear to him as the rival of his brother, my dearest friend—nor can I clear myself from this idea by explaining the situation of Henry, not knowing how far affairs at the castle may, at the present moment, make this eligible. Doubtless, John is gone away displeased, or possibly my fears may interpret falsely—he may have been startled at the warmth of the expression—and yet perhaps—perhaps no precise discovery has

has been made." In the midst of these ruminations John re-entered, and cordially taking Charles by the hand, inquired when he would wish to set out for the abbey. "As soon," said Charles, "as I have paid my respects to my new Colonel, and obtained his permission of absence, which, I must confess, is a little unreasonable to begin with." "By no means," said John, generously, "I engage to procure you both immediately. Come, my friend, dispatch, you know, is the soul of business."

John took hold of Charles's arm, and walked away with him so readily, that the latter really believed his last reflection went to the truth; namely, that his expression had not extended to the discovery of his affection for Olivia. The Colonel being found at head-quarters, John Fitzorton presented Charles Stuart in the following manner:—"This, Sir, is the youth for whom Colonel Forbes has a friendship, of which the basis is not favour, but merit. I need not say more in his behalf to make Colonel Warren consider him as an acquisition to the regiment; but I must add, from my own knowledge of his

his virtues, and personal bravery, that if I should be found as worthy to occupy the post of the lamented Lascelles, as I will pledge myself this young man will approve himself of the station my promotion leaves open, and which one of my family has presented to him, under your auspices, Sir, you will have reason to be doubly satisfied; and, what has rarely happened to me in any occurrence of life, I shall be satisfied with myself."

Colonel Warren received his new Lieutenant as such an introduction gave claim to. "But," continued John, "the youth is desirous to owe to his new Colonel an indulgence on *advance*, even before he has done any duty. He has a lovely sister, whose situation requires a brother's immediate councils and consolation; other family affairs likewise summon his attention; and though the diffidence which connects with high and genuine pretensions induces him to shrink from the solicitation, I have taken upon me, on the surety of your character, Sir, to come forward on the occasion."—"Young gentleman," said the Colonel, turning to Charles, "the sooner necessary

necessary business is done the better; we expect stirring work in the military line in another month or two—my advices of the day are pretty strong—this then is the time you can best be spared from the services my regiment may expect from a man who comes into it thus *doubly armed*, with the recommendation of Captain Fitzorton and Colonel Forbes. Adieu! therefore—you will return as speedily as circumstances admit.”

Proper acknowledgments being given and received, John conducted the Lieutenant to the different officers of the regiment; and after dining at the mess, by way of giving to the initiatory visit all its advantages in favour of the Lieutenant, he left to the choice of that gentleman either to defer his intended journey to the morning, or to set out immediately. “I rather think, my dear Sir,” said Charles, “that—that—that it will be expected I am now on the road;—and as—as—as you know the Colonel intimated I might be wanted in my place in a short time, it will, perhaps, be better to—to—to——pray, what do you think yourself?” John, perceiving the Lieutenant

was

was getting into a fresh dilemma, rang the bell before the hesitation in the Lieutenant's speech grew worse, and on the servant's appearing, said, "You will make ready, and bring round to the door, this gentleman's horse:" then, turning to Charles, he added, smiling, "Let me be your commanding officer at present, in giving marching orders." Immediately after which he adverted to more general subjects, in order to take off the too keen sense of that particular one on which he saw Charles was irritable. A soldier of the regiment, who attended John, soon came to say, "The gentleman's horse was at the door." On which Charles, after more impediments than the simple question seemed to demand, had it not been preceded by a succession of little stumbling blocks, ventured to ask, "If the letters for Fitzorton Castle, and the parcel for—for—for Olivia Clare, were ready?"—"No," observed John, "I find, on reflection, I must have a little more time to make them up, and a few days more or less can make no material difference."—Charles rose to take his leave.

John advanced towards him, and opened the door with one hand, while he cordially offered the other to Charles. "Lieutenant," said he, "you deserve honour for your own good qualities, and generous compassion for the bad ones; but I will not wound you—you are, moreover, the chosen friend of our Henry Fitzorton:—for all these reasons, and for numberless others, I sincerely wish your happiness. I suspect, also, you are somewhat too sensible of the charming powers of our Olivia. Alas! do not shrink from the observation; if it is unfounded, happier is it for yourself; if it goes to the fact, ah! my friend, it is no way unnatural that you should love what is most lovely: I, you, or any other man might have been carried beyond our powers—but have a care—you have not a heart to endure the thought of breaking in upon the plan of two of the most venerable men that ever gave lustre to the character of parent; nor could you bear to enchain an alienated woman, even if she should be brought to sacrifice herself to your arms. Alas! it is with reason we make a petition against being
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led into temptation, a part of our daily prayer. That changeful cheek and averted eye seem to say you are going into the midst of it. My dear brother-officer, the strongest of the sons of men can often be saved only by determined retreat. Oh, beware! You had better be the most miserable of the wretched, *alone* and *unobserved*, than call in another who cannot love you, to *share* your fate. Hasten then your journey; but should you, at the end of it, find your sorrow greater than your joy, return to your appointment here, and assuring yourself that the only remedy for the disappointments of life is *employment*, let even your calamity have the liberal effect of occupying you in some active virtue: so shall you, in a manner, remember others till you forget yourself.—Give my love to the family, and farewell.”

It was not unlucky for Charles that John precluded reply by leading him to his horse, which, having mounted, he rode away, attempting many silent acknowledgments, and looking as many promises—all of which, he remembered, with a predetermination to

fulfil them till he saw Olivia Clare; or rather, till he saw her likeness in that very picture which John was finishing on his arrival, and of which it was first intended to make him the bearer; but, after the suspicious effusions which escaped the Lieutenant, John thought this would be making himself accessory in the temptation he would wish him to avoid; and though John was too generous to throw any impediments, that might favour of the jealous lover, in this young man's way, he would not do any thing that might promote his unfortunate passion. When Charles had departed, John Fitzorton sat, as was usual with him in any new difficulty, in silent thought, his hands folded over his face.—“ Ill-fated Charles!” said he, when he could articulate; “ it is hard upon us both. We have been attracted by uncommon beauty and uncommon virtue; yet there is no quarrelling with the Creator for having made such a creature, nor with our beloved Henry for being possessed of happier powers to make her his own. I am very wretched, but methinks I love him the more, at least I think the more exaltedly of his vir-

tues,

tues, for the very charm that has wrought my despair; for I am convinced that Olivia is not a woman to prefer one man to another on caprice, or the eye's absurd vanity of calling a handsome man her own. No, Charles, our Henry, depend on it, has endowments of *mind* as well as person, which we do not possess, that have given him this distinction over us both."

John turned the point many ways without coming to any thing satisfactory; and at the end of his soliloquies he took the miniature from his pocket, where he had placed it on the entrance of Charles, and after gazing on it with more true admiration than Pigmalion bestowed on the adored masterpiece of his art, he confessed he was yielding to great weakness, even though unseen of the world, and then, pressing the miniature to his lips, retired with it to his bed-chamber. His waking thoughts were pointed against human frailty, and a very energetic philippic followed on the weakness of man and the strength of woman; during which he found the resemblance of Olivia had, somehow, found its way

to his pillow; but after he had risen he exclaimed, "I see plainly little of voluntary virtue is to be expected from incorrigible mortals; all is to be done by main force—the scourge, the wheel, the prison, and the gibbet, are all necessary instruments of terror! A Damoclesian sword must always hang over the human head! I have no superior merit to Charles, except that I am playing the fool by *myself*, and I fear he is gone to expose himself before company."—At the close of these reflections, John paid his parting adorations to the picture; for by an opportunity, which happened in the course of the following day, he sent it to the fair Olivia, to prevent farther mischief to himself, and in discharge of his promise. The use which that enchanting girl made of it was such as the reader has seen, and such as the truly generous John had foreseen also.

The next occurrence that happened to John was one of the most trying of his whole life, in the information which reached him by means of his father, who wrote to him in this manner:—

“ My

“ My ever worthy John,

“ I have no time now to comment on the affair of our dear Henry’s heart, whether it has had its wanderings or not: young men were always truants, you know, from their boyish days; even John had his airy visions, and played with shadows. These all yield to substances in due time. Neither can I now stop to examine the precise fact alleged in the anonymous letter: whether a forgery or not, your conduct, my John, is alike liberal, and I thank you.—Our Henry is, at the present moment, all I wish him—he *cannot* himself be otherwise than happy with Olivia, and the strongest reasons that can urge to any union, combine to make it proper she should become his wife. The point, the place, the time, the circumstances, are all adjusted.—Can you not meet us at Adsell Hall? Can it not have the air and effect of an unexpected measure? Your good little girl has more than once hinted at the sanction of her guardian giant, as she sometimes calls you. “ My hands would tremble,” said she, “ even as he gave it to Henry; but surely the union would have

more strength were approving John to pronounce that it was good. Tell him so—and tell him, too, that the promises I shall make to his brother, at the sacred altar, cannot be more holy than those I long since made *him* to be, all my life long, his good Olivia.” I have repeated her own words, John, and leave you to act upon them. Henry has confidentially informed me he has been writing to you a kind of journal history of affairs here from the time of your departure to the present date; but since our last discourse, in which all the better parts of his nature were called out, he has determined not to send it—nay, I saw him consign it to the flames. If you can quit quarters, you will not fail to give us the meeting. Now and ever, God bless you, my excellent son! is the wish of your

“ True and tender father,

“ ARMINE FITZORTON.

“ P. S. Your beautiful drawing of our Olivia has been received with joy. It does honour to the artist—it does almost justice to Nature. Olivia declares it far surpasses the latter;

latter; but while she makes that declaration, Nature, as if piqued, asserts her superiority, and throws such fresh blooms into the countenance of this, surely the fairest of her works, that John would himself own she is the best painter."

The reader perceives this epistle arrived when Henry, wholly subdued by the paternal blessing on his head, had promised to become obedient to his father's wishes, and Sir Armine took advantage of that moment to hurry off an account and invitation to his eldest son.

Having already said, it was the most trying circumstance that his son John had yet encountered in life, a description of particulars is thereby precluded; we shall only observe, that after having again fixed himself in one of his ruminating postures, the profound reflections of an hour were concluded by the following reply to the invitation:

"Sir Armine and my friend must not expect John at Adsell, or at the altar. I should not be an auspicious assistant at the ceremony; but neither the parents, nor the children, nor

even the lovers themselves, can more earnestly pray, now and ever, that peace, and honour, and uninterrupted joy, may be the issue of their nuptials, than, Sir,

“ Your honoured and dutiful son,

“ JOHN FITZORTON.”

This answer was addressed to Sir Armine, at Adfell Hall, and there met him on his arrival, after the disastrous events at the forest: but it was earnestly requested by Sir Armine, nay, and even made a condition by the apothecary, that Mr. John Fitzorton should not be made acquainted with those events, nor any thing that had allusion to them, till Sir Armine judged proper, even were death to be the issue; “for I foresee,” said the reverend sufferer, “that worse than death would be the consequence of John’s hearing of this fresh outrage of Sir Guise Stuart.” Sir Armine bound his whole family, by an oath of honour, to profound silence, and all readily joined in it. Well, perhaps, was it for the aggressor they did so, for dreadful must have been the result of the intelligence.

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The afflicted John, indeed, wanted not any fresh cause of grief. He attempted to engage, with earnestness, in his official duties—he even sought its social reliefs—he mixed with his brother-officers—he employed himself in the ardours of a field day, and passed his evenings at the mess; but, when the day appointed for the nuptials of Henry and Olivia approached, his mighty heart and powerful nature were sorely shaken—he invoked blessings on them both—protested that Nature's most insupportable curse was upon him—received and was denied the solace of tears alternately—kept the shutters of his chamber closed, that he might indulge in the sad luxury of his forlorn condition the whole day undisturbed—never quitted the bed on which he had thrown himself till towards midnight, and supposing by that time Olivia had become the bride of his tenderly beloved brother, he kneeled down by his bed-side, and with a fervour that from the sincerity of his agitated soul applied once more the expressive words that had been so long in family recol-

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lection,

lection, on different occasions—" Bless, O bless ye together!"

He then adverted to the Lieutenant, exclaiming, " Ah! dear partner in despair! if thou hast been an eye-witness to the events of the past day, thou art even more to be commiserated than John Fitzorton, whose only comfort is derived from his determined absence."

After two days silent suffering, in this manner, he nursed his mind into sufficient composure to attend to the common duties of his life and situation; the heaviness of the storm was past—a calm succeeded—and as he did not receive any accounts from Adfell, or the castle, for a considerable time, he attributed their silence to their festivity, and rather dreaded than hoped the arrivals of the post.

The intermediate history of our admirable John thus brought down to the events at Adfell, we go back to the family party assembled there with more ease and satisfaction.

CHAP. VII.

THE reader has been already apprised, that Sir Guise Stuart meditated an effectual revenge, and was prepared to expect some violent but cautious measures; and he now sees that this affray was intended to satiate his evil designs; but there are various particulars which, as they cannot be known but by our explication, shall now be developed. Perhaps there are some impatient spirits who have already condemned us for not satisfying them sooner; not considering that divers are the events of life, which, whatever pain and inconvenience they give, cannot be explained till after we have suffered from them, and that we often feel the blow before we discover the hand from whence it comes.

To untie, therefore, the several knotty points in order, as they lie before us, we must first use the privilege of a victor, by stripping the vanquished of whatever we deem valuable. In the pillage of the ingenious David Otley's pocket, we find the following letter from his prime seducer, Mr. Valentine Miles:

" To David Otley.

" Friend David,

" Your intelligence has been communicated to Sir Guise and Mrs. Tempest, and is most welcome to all of us. We are of opinion, the former plan which we had in preparation should be renounced as tedious in its process, and uncertain in its issue. The wedding journey promises a more immediate, as well as a more secure way of paying off old scores; for you are not to be told that all parties who join in the plot have been grossly injured; but, as there is not, I see, a moment to be lost, this is only to desire you will take the abbey in your way to Adsell, in order to receive our final instructions.

" Your faithful

" V. MILES."

From this ingenious epistle the reader learns, that Otley was wholly in the interest of Miles, to whom he communicated the first news of the intended nuptials, time, place, &c.; and being a confidential domestic, he was
employed

employed to make a very early report at the abbey of what was in contemplation at the castle. In the next place, we find hereby, that Mrs. Tempest entered into the mysteries of this confederacy; urged indeed simply by the spirit of a disappointed woman's vengeance; for, as to the insults which either Sir Guise or Miles had received, she would, probably, have sat with the most philosophical patience to have seen either or both of them mount the scaffold. But the affronts they had received, served very well to cover the revenge she resolved to take on her own account. In truth, her designs were more deeply vindictive than the Baronet's: they went to the blood not only of the offending Henry, but of his whole family; and her hate, like her love, was a conflagration that consumed almost her own life, and made it extremely difficult for her to support the necessary ripening of her own purposes. Her joy, therefore, was excessive on the news of this promising journey, and her impetuous fancy outstripping that of her compeers, suggested the whole business of the assassination, and

and had furnished "all appliances and means to boot" before either of her colleagues, fertile as each was in mischievous expedients, had seen any advantage to be derived from Otley's communication. By these means, the work of a few hours made so good, or rather so bad progress, that all things were arranged before sunrise; and never, perhaps, sallied forth a troop of murderers more determined than the heroine Mrs. Tempest, her generals Sir Guise Stuart and Miles, and her aid de camp the renegade David Otley, and three other chosen men who had been picked from the mass of their dependents, and bought up to the most hazardous enterprise. The chief delay arose on the part of the Baronet, who, though he heartily desired to promote the work of vengeance, apprehended it might prove a service of much danger, notwithstanding all the precautions he meant to take; and he would have been contented to stay at home, and hear from his agents a history of the attack and its success, without taking an active part in it. But Mrs. Tempest so excited him by her daring arguments and biting reproofs,

reproofs, that he less dreaded to join in the attack of the common enemy, than encounter her virulent upbraidings singly. And though the superaddition of Miles's terrifying conversation was not wanting, it wound up his fears to a pitch that prepared him for the destruction of all the travellers. Thus, partly from shame, and partly from cowardice, but, more than all, the assurances he received of there being little or no hazard, he suffered himself to join the banditti, and assist in person.—His conduct and caution afterwards in the action are already unfolded.

The gang were ready to set out from Mrs. Tempest's lodge, where the plot was laid, as Mr. Otley arrived, saying he had been delayed by Sir Armine, but that there was not a single moment to lose, as the Fitzorton party would be in their carriages, and on their horses, at six. "It is now," he observed, "on the stroke of four, and if we make proper use of our time, shall have the advantage of two hours." "Which will be all we can desire," said Miles; "but let us not set out in a body: that will look suspicious." After a few

few more arrangements, they began their march by the contrary road to that which the Fitzortons were to take; for Otley, having been consulted on this subject by his old master, with whom his advice in all such matters was looked on as oracular, told his own party how they might avoid a premature rencontre; "as," said he, "I found no difficulty in persuading Sir Armine, that the way I wished him to go was that he ought to take." In short, he settled the geography of the route, and marked the spot at which the attack should be made.

CHAP. VIII.

WHILE these transactions were in preparation at the abbey, a conspiracy of a very different kind was laid by the ill-starr'd Charles Stuart, who immediately, on the receipt of the letters that intimated the wedding-day, and the intended particulars of its celebration, fell into a state so near distraction, that a thousand plans to prevent the nuptials were formed, approved, and renounced almost in the same instant. Several of these, indeed, were scarcely

scarcely possible to enter into the brain of any but a man agitated by the extremes of love and of despair. Rather, however, than suffer the hated ceremony betwixt Olivia and Henry to take place, he determined, thinking, perhaps, with Othello, such murders would be heavenly, that the death of friend and mistress should be crowned by his own. But, to avoid this tragic catastrophe, he resolved on a project, which, to him, appeared capable of producing the end desired. The idea of Partington's resolute spirit; his love of doing what men, not daring to act for themselves, would be afraid to think on; his indefatigable perseverance in whatever he engaged; and, amidst all his singularities, his uncorrupted integrity;—all these, forming one grand idea, rushed upon his fancy so strongly, that without precisely knowing what good might result from it, and feeling that the bad was nearly at the worst, he assumed a composure which lulled even the penetrating Caroline, who now but ill-disguised her own sorrows. The Lieutenant gave out that he would make a visit to a brother officer at
some

some miles distance, and try if change of scene, and of company, could not restore him to that tranquillity which he had lost. The house at which Mr. Partington was then resident stood at the distance of a very long day's journey from the abbey, yet, literally travelling on the spur of the occasion, Charles reached it just as Partington was sitting down to dinner. The company at table consisted of the whole family of the Atwoods, at least all that part of it which had been taken under Partington's protection—Jenny being, as the Reader well knows, happily situated with the Fitzortons.

At the sight of a stranger they all rose; upon which Partington, calling them a set of vile scoundrelly good-for-nothing vagabonds, insisted upon each resitting in the seat, and pulled the Lieutenant down into a chair, at the same time ordering him to partake of the family fare, and feel himself as much at home as if he were the son of a friend. "But," said Partington, "I know how to make distinctions between an infamous rascal like Charles Stuart, and his all-glorious father, Sir Guise!"

While

While Partington made this observation, in his own extraordinary manner, he was heaping Charles's plate with what he conceived to be the rarity of the table.

At the name of Stuart, the blood in a tide of the most violent crimson covered the countenance of young Atwood; and at the words father Sir Guise, the youth could hardly conceal or contain an indignation which rose from his full heart, till a repetition of the Baronet's name quivered on his lips, and died upon his tongue.

"You must be friends," cried Partington, noticing the young man's emotion. "The Lieutenant here is as great a vagabond as yourself: he has, like me, the highest respect for his exalted sire; but I shall think you youngsters less good for nothing than I could wish, if you do not, like me, know how to make distinctions." So saying, he put the hand of Charles into that of young Atwood, who would have shrunk back from the slightest contact with the son of the man who had dishonoured his family—but Partington exclaimed, "I tell you, stripling, this is as good
for

for nothing a scoundrel as any I know, and therefore you must be friends."

Charles, however, made a shew of eating, without relishing a morsel; and immediately on the cloth being removed, Partington, perceiving his distress, forcibly led, or rather carried him into another apartment, where Charles, eagerly catching Partington by the hand, exclaimed, "The nuptials of Olivia Clare and Henry Fitzorton are to take place within twenty-four hours. *He loves her not.* It will be a sacrifice. *I adore her.* Our destiny will be determined. The effect will be dreadful. Sir Armine is not to be persuaded. O! Mr. Partington, is there no stratagem—no miracle to save us all? Accumulated will be the horrors that must ensue, if this forced alliance takes place. O! pardon the folly, the madness of this incoherence—this journey—the last effort of a desperate man!—Farewell! Something terrible is at hand—for, at the hazard of ten thousand lives, Olivia Clare shall not give her hand to Henry Fitzorton."

"And

“And when is this forced alliance, as you call it, threatened?” questioned Partington. “To-morrow begins the accursed journey, and on the following day my doom is to be sealed. Farewell!” — “Hold! you headstrong vagabond!” said Partington, detaining him; “let us return to the company——not another word.” — He then hurried back the passive Charles into the dining-room, and with yet greater vehemence than he had precipitated him out of it. And ere he had well opened the door he ejaculated, “Avaunt, ye lazy, good-for-nothing devils; here is a world of work to be performed.—Young man,” said he, addressing himself to Atwood, junior, “your benefactor’s favourite child, young Fitzorton, and your sister’s patroness, demand your assistance. Yet more, you vagabond, *your enemy’s son*, but *my friend*, is to be rescued from despair—even the son of Sir Guise Stuart.” — Atwood gave his hand to Charles. “Aye!” said Partington, “you are the caitiff I thought ye, so take home these old vagabonds, your father and mother, who would be useless lumber in this expedition to
their

their farm: and if none of us return alive, for dire are our designs, take care of yourselves as well as you can. For you, Charles, mount your horse:—no—first write a few lines to Henry, ordering him to be of good cheer—to smile—to—in short, I will give you final instructions what is to be said to the vagabond as soon as I have adjusted a little preliminary with that old scoundrel my steward.”

The business with Le Maitre, the steward, was to furnish a stout staff and suitable disguise for each person intended to act a part in Partington’s drama.

“Disguises, weapons offensive and defensive, you old vagabond!” were all the orders Le Maitre received: obedient to which, in something less than half an hour, Le Maitre had got together such habiliments and accoutrements as would have equipped a pillaging party in the days of Robin Hood. Young Atwood soon returned from the farm attended by two husbandmen, who, he said, were to be trusted. The means of conveyance were ready, a servant was dispatched with the letter to Henry, and on the road were unfolded the

particulars of the enterprize. The whole groupe, more especially young Atwood, who was of an affectionate disposition, entered into it with ardour and alacrity. "Olivia," said Partington, "is an abominable scoundrel, and must be saved even from the man she loves, because he does not love her, it seems—but the rascal cannot help that. Yet, take notice, Charles, I will prevent forced matches, but I will not be a match-maker: so you and the wench must settle it as well as you can afterwards—though I will own to you I should engage with some good will in any project that might favour the escape of a vile ugly young scoundrel like your sister, from such a noble-minded, brave, generous gentleman as your father! So that when we have, by the plot now rolling in my head, prevented Olivia from running into the arms of Henry, I shall be ready, provided the girl be willing, to aid and abet Henry to run into the arms of Caroline; and as for Olivia, get you but the consent of that little villain, and you shall have mine; and after that, a fig for the opposition of fathers and mothers!—the handsome rascal will

will be the dearer after she has put you to a good deal of trouble. For my part, I know of but one natural or reasonable impediment to a man's marrying the lass he fancies, and that is, her fancying another; or not fancying him. So now for our expedition—to release a love-sick knight from a damsel who is sallying forth to have him whether he will or not!”

In this sort of discourse did Partington and his companions shorten their way to Adsell forest: what followed their arrival at the appointed place has been circumstantially related from the first and second attack, even to the catastrophe.

Now, should the reader, in a retrospect of his own life, be unable to trace any wild project of love or revenge; if, in a survey of his antipathies, and of his affections, he should discover no ideas conceived, nor schemes executed, as little sensible as those which instigated Sir Guise to vengeance, Mrs. Tempest to jealousy, Miles to study at once his interest and revenge, and the traitor David Otley to prefer a golden bribe to the duty he owed his

his trusting master, we *congratulate* him on his exemption from the darker shades in the human character. On the other hand, should he, in the aforesaid examination of himself, happen upon none of those generous excesses in his own feelings which correspond to the feelings of Partington, nor any which urge him to love Olivia, and to bestow his pity on Henry and Charles; if, moreover, he finds no congenial touch that sends the sorrows of Caroline Stuart thrilling through his blood, nor any glow of approbation at the defeat of villainy, as it was discovered and punished at the edge of Adfell Forest, we *commiserate* him for that he is incapable of passing any manner of judgment on the fair, the beautiful, and the good of human nature.

CHAPTER IX.

THE night was past at the inn with more composure than the fatigues of the day, and disasters of the evening, gave reason to expect. Even the slumbers of Sir Armine were unbroken till towards the break of day,

when, seeing the still wakeful Henry at his bed-side, he affectionately said to him, "I feel in less particular pain, and am so generally refreshed, that, I trust, I shall be able, about mid-day, to proceed in our journey. Meantime, my beloved child, you require rest yourself, which I intreat you to take while I make trial to sleep again. Bless you for ever!"

At this moment little Fitz suddenly started from his light slumbers, leaped upon the bed in dumb but expressive eloquence of fond caresses—made with those timid advances and modest tremblings, creeping betwixt hope and fear—which seemed to purport—"I am the dog of an enemy, and my humble congratulations may not only be unwelcome, but suspected." This was, assuredly, Sir Armine's idea, if not the dog's, for no sooner did that venerable man perceive the poor little fellow, than, with an encouraging benignity, he cried, while he patted the smooth head, and stroked the silken ears—"I have no quarrel with thee, simpleton; and I thank thine honest love for these testimonies of thy good wishes."

wishes." Little Fitz listened to the kind voice, and fondled, in turn, the careressing hand, then gently retired to Henry's lap, where he had passed the night. Yet such was the entire love that Henry bore his father, and so wholly was he engrossed by the injuries that good man had received, that he never adverted once to the dog's belonging to his beloved Caroline, till his father's notice of the animal, and the visible progress he made towards recovery, had eased his heart of terrors for a life dearer than his own. He now received the dog with a tenderness which indicated feelings that attached themselves to the minutest thing living or dead, with which the object of the master's passion has, or can, by the magic power of fancy and the heart, be made to connect.

Sir Armine dropt again to sleep, and continued to doze till the surgeon came to examine the wounds. Lady Fitzorton, Olivia, Mr. Clare, Jenny Atwood, her brother, and True George—the latter had, unbidden, kept watch on the outside his old master's chamber door—were all ready to overwhelm the surgeon with questions on Sir Armine's recovery.

How great then was their wonder ! their ecstasy ! to hear this intelligent disciple of *Æsculapius* exclaim to the whole assembled party,—“ The patient, methinks, cannot do better than get his breakfast in bed, about an hour after which, if the sun continues his fair promises, it will be his own fault, or yours, ladies and gentlemen, not Nature’s, if he is not again in his carriage, so as to eat his dinner at the place of your destination.”

The general rapture into which the whole family were thrown by these tidings, produced the very delays that each individual desired to avoid. Lady Fitzorton and Olivia, neither of whom had closed their eyes through the night, could have embraced the surgeon; the venerable Clare shook his hand heartily; and Henry, emptying his purse into the surgeon’s not-refusing palm, leaped about with all the demonstrations of an extravagant transport, which wholly obliterated the idea, that, with the recovery he so hailed, would end his every hope, and revive his absolute despair. Jenny’s tender heart dropt tears on her brother’s bosom, and hastened to prepare breakfast.

But honest George had always, like Dennison, the art of being extremely happy, and useful at the same time; and, with the lightning's speed, he had flown into the kitchen immediately on the utterance of the surgeon's hint, that his old master would be in a situation to travel, if not the fault of himself or some one of the family. He resolved, at any rate, the fault, if any, should not lie with him: though he would have been extremely ready to take the blame of it from any other.

While these matters were transacting above in the house, Partington and *his* corps were not idle below in the stable, where the degraded Sir Guise and his associates were still under the guard of young Atwood. About midnight, Partington betook himself to a truss of clean straw, as nothing could prevail on him to repair to any other bed: he had sworn not to quit sight of so honourable a personage as Sir Guise Stuart till he had the supreme felicity of seeing him fully committed. He made this observation with a profound bow; and, indeed, through the

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whole

whole night treated the Baronet with an external respect, which he would have refused to any but one for whom he felt the most sovereign indignation.

“Be sure, you young, good-for-nothing scoundrel,” said he to the worthy Atwood, “that you do not suffer *your* eyes to close, should mine be caught napping; for I have not the smallest doubt but that noble, generous, magnanimous gentleman in the straw”—three respectful bows—“would try to escape, by which I should lose the heartfelt satisfaction I promise myself, in seeing him dungeoned, if not hanged”—two more bows.

At the end of this sarcastic speech Partington crossed his arms, and nestling in the straw, soon enjoyed the repose he courted, and which did not refuse to visit him in his lowly bed. Atwood grasped his crabstick, and in manly silence waved it over the head of the prisoners, not condescending to speak during the whole night.

CHAPTER X.

By this time it had gone forth, that the said prisoners were not actually highwaymen, but wanton assassins, who had maliciously plotted against the lives of Mr. Clare, Sir Armine Fitzorton, and their families, to gratify their private revenge.

This hint was no sooner spread abroad, than the inhabitants of Adsell were up in arms; for the whole of that parish was in the manorship of Olivia, and almost every house in the village, and most of the land that smiled around it, was, by virtue of her grandfather's will, the property of that young lady. An estate of Sir Guise, or rather of Mrs. Tempest, lay within the distance of a few miles in the same county, so that both parties were well known at Adsell. In consequence of which, the yard adjoining to the barn wherein Sir Guise and Co. were deposited, was crowded by people of both sexes, who would have made it unnecessary for young Atwood to stand sentinel any longer, as they would certainly have knocked the Baronet and his

illustrious companions on the head, had not Partington dispersed the populace before he betook himself to rest, and pacified them by an assurance, that they should have timely notice of the execution of the honourable gentleman, who, he made no doubt, would suffer to their hearts content, in a very little time.

In this hope they departed to their several houses; and it was about the third hour of the morning, when all was quiet in the inn and its environs. But just as young Atwood had traversed the outside of the barn, the court adjoining, and returned to his station within,—it was at this tempting moment, “the very witching time o’ th’ night,” that a whispering, succeeded by a soft, fearful tread of persons, was heard moving towards the barn. A small lantern, which one of them held, discovered a man and a woman, the latter led by the former, and each, by turns, in earnest conversation.

Young Atwood did not doubt but some kind of treachery was on foot, as the first words that reached his ear were touching the liberation of Sir Guise; he retired, therefore,
a few

a few paces, that he might gain more information. The persons advanced, and observing the barn door half open, they entered cautiously; and, after walking on tiptoe a few steps, one of them said, "All is still; the guard and the guarded are equally overcome by sleep—I have thus far performed my promise—you desired only to see the vile author of your ruin, and to warn him, that he may leave off his wicked courses before it be too late. I have consented to this, because it is what a Christian should do; but as for this Sir Guise, he ought to wish, for the sake of his own soul, that he should have time to repent, and then be hanged out of the way, for the good of mankind. So, as this is the last time, I hope, the wicked man can be seen on this side the gallows. Take fast hold of my hand and follow me, for by the rustling of the straw we must be near the prisoners." Saying this, the person who spoke stepped forward, holding up the lantern, by whose light the object he and his companion were in search of presented itself to view, lying in an abject posture,

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posture, his hands and legs bound, and his associates in the same situation.

Young Atwood receded as the night-walkers advanced, desirous to see the real motive and end of their enterprise. One of the adventurers now held the lantern to the face of Sir Guise, the miserable paleness of which, and every other sign of guilt and fear, caused the person who had not yet spoken to exclaim, in a piteous tone—"Alas! unhappy man! did I ever think your conduct would bring you to this? and that the woman you have most injured should live to see it?"—Then, turning to her companion, she exclaimed, "Wicked as he is, I cannot bear to see him in this sad posture, tied like a criminal, and thrown, as it were, into a dungeon! If," added the speaker, falling on her knees to her companion—"Oh! if there is any compassion in your heart; if it has a spark of the love you profess to feel for me, suffer me, and assist me, to loose these cruel cords. I ask no more."—"Loose the cords!" returned the other—"No! were I never to see you more,

more, although you are dear to my soul, and I now tell you so all at once, as my heart to my body, I would neither assist, nor suffer you to give that monster liberty of hand or foot. Had I thought Mrs. Jenny could have desired such a thing, not all the world—no, not my love for you, which I feel will be all the world to George, should have made me shew you the place! What would your good brother say to this? If poor dear Jerom had his eye on us now, only think how angry he would be!”

At the names Jenny and George, young Atwood rushed forward, and cried out in a terrible voice, even before he was seen, “O wicked! wicked girl! would you set at liberty the wretch who has undone you; who had well nigh brought your poor father and mother with sorrow to the grave; and who has almost murdered your best friend and benefactor—for whose sake, and for his other numberless sins, he is destined to meet his deserts at last?—Yes, vile sinner,” added he, turning to Sir Guise, “you will be hanged, you and all your accomplices: but alas! what are your lives, or

the lives of ten thousand thousand such villains, to the finger-ache of such a noble gentleman as Sir Armine Fitzorton; or the innocence of this poor, wicked, unhappy girl, whom you have ruined, and who is still sinful enough to wish you were free? As for you, George," continued he, "I am not angry with—; I know your love for my sister, and am sorry for you. I know you would have died sooner than consent to let him escape; and you only came here with the girl, out of pure good will, because she pretended she wanted to rebuke her seducer. Rebuke him! why, you could not say an angry word to him; you know you could not, Jenny. Surely the girls are distracted mad, George! they love the scoundrels who undo them better than the men who would sooner lose their lives than do them a wrong!"

The poor Jane, overwhelmed with her agitations, at being thus in the presence of her brother, lover, and betrayer, could scarcely stand under the support of the two former—"Would to God I were dead!" said she: "but you wrong me, brother; I did not mean

mean to make Mr. George guilty of ingratitude to his master by releasing Sir Guise, I—I—I—only wished him not to be—be—bound in that manner.”—Here her tears choaked her utterance, and she wept aloud.

Her sorrows awakened Partington, who no sooner heard the story from the honest lips of George, than he called Jenny a good-for-nothing little vagabond, shaking her most kindly by the hand all the time, and desired George and Jerom to lead her back to the house, commanding them to say nothing of her adventure to any of the Fitzortons, and insisting the pretty young scoundrel should no more be scolded.—“Scolded, your honour!” replied George; “I would not let her own brother, nor even your honour scold her, if I could help it, without knocking out both your brains; only I thought”——“The thought of knocking out our brains is good, and might in that case be justifiable, perhaps,” cries Partington; “but thinking is loss of time, you rascal.—Here, both of you give her a kiss, and do as I ordered, while I relieve guard over this all-worthy gentleman”—
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a profound bow to Sir Guise—"and his two veteran associates,"—a bow to each, till his head almost touched the straw.

Jenny went away somewhat pacified, but could not help casting more than one look behind. For though, perhaps, even Partington did not more thoroughly despise the actions of the Baronet, nor more execrate his principles, than did this virtuously-disposed young woman—she felt for him involuntary emotions of pity and tenderness.

The good Partington saw this midnight enterprise, as, in truth, he did most other things, in the proper light; and his knowledge of the human heart joined the pity he felt in his own, to determine it was a matter to be hushed up. On the return, therefore, of the young men, he took each of them by the hand and desired them to be of good cheer, since they had every reason to believe that "when that amiable gentleman"—a profound reverence to Sir Guise—"had hung his hour, the grand enemy to the girl's peace of mind would be removed; and he did not doubt but he should see Jenny as good-for-nothing

nothing a sister to Jerom, and as infamous a wife to George, as any happy little varlet could desire to be."

This inverted mode of compliment being well understood, the youths were made again comfortable, and the whole affair ended by Jerom's taking George by the hand, saying, "If so be things went that way, there was not a man in the world he would so soon wish to call his brother, provided the affair with that vile monster could be put up with—but, for his part, he would not marry a duchess, no, not the queen's majesty herself, if he knew she had been miss to another man, though it were a king on his throne."—"Jerom, Jerom! you talk like a hector and a fool!" said Partington.—"He talks," said George, "a'nt please your honour, like a young fellow who has never been in love; true love forgives every thing that happens before wedlock, and most things that happen after. And as to Jenny, I think her the modestest girl in the whole world, and I love her the best, though I never told her so till to-day; and when Sir Guise is dead, I think all will be well between Jenny and

and me; though I had rather he should live fifty years, and keep me out of Jenny's heart for ever, than that any harm should betide my dear good old master, or any of my honoured young ones, or any of the family, not forgetting Mr. and Miss Clare."

"George," said Partington, affecting to cough, "you are one of the most unsupportable young rascals I ever knew—give me your hand. But take this for your comfort; whether Sir Armine lives or dies, Atwood's sister shall be your wife, and this right-worthy old youth"—another bow—"shall swing with both his excellent friends, because it would be a sin to part them."—Here he rolled the Baronet and his associates about, and heaped the straw over them as if they were so many pigs.

CHAPTER XI.

THE provisions which the youth ordered to be brought into the barn were now resorted to, and the exulting trio sat down to the repast, spread upon a winnowing machine, turned

turned the wrong side, with as high spirits, and as hearty an appetite, as they ever enjoyed; particularly as one of the waiters entered with a billet to Partington, containing the following words:

“ To Basil Partington, Esq.

“ My poor father is in a sound repose.— Request my unhappy friend Charles to come to the bed which is prepared for him; and do you, dear Sir, take quiet possession of yours. I cannot quit my post, but hope to relate good tidings in the morning.

“ Yours affectionately,

“ HENRY FITZORTON.”

Partington having read this note, and folded it up, he handed it about, first penciling on the back of it these words—“ Read, but let not the worthy Sir Guise suspect it brings any good news.”—He gave it to George, who opened it, and scarcely able to conceal his joy, put it in the hands of Jerom.

“ Miserable intelligence!” said Partington, with great gravity:—“ No hopes you see;—
the

the surgeon, no doubt, gives it up as a lost case.—Heigho!—let us raise our spirits with a glass of that wine. Fill, George. Come, here's to Sir Guise's speedy mounting, and to the sudden execution of Valentine Miles, Esq. the chaste Mrs. Tempest—for we shall noose her too—and that most true and trusty of all valets"—an inclination of the whole body as he mentioned each—"David Otley, gentleman!"

"It would be a compliment, gentlemen, to offer you any refreshment; indeed, seeing you have so short time to live, it would be throwing good things away upon almost dead carcases; and I hate to be extravagant:—so, wishing, with all our souls, that the hangman may do justice to all three of you, we have the honour to drink your good health in all Christian charity!"

The bitter sarcasm of tone, gesture, and action, which characterised the scorn of Partington, cannot be conveyed in language.

The bottle was emptied, and the repast finished, in the like spirit of biting ridicule, which often extorted an oath from the daring

Valen-

Valentine, and drove the abashed Sir Guise, looking more swinish than before, under covert of his straw.

One of the waiters now brought a letter into the barn, saying, it came by a special messenger, who was then waiting a reply in the kitchen. It contained what follows:

“ To Basil Partington, Esq.

“ Forgive my having deceived you. Instead of retiring to my bed, the pretence with which I left you, I fled from the most horrid of all human sights—the presence of a father who hath made his son curse the hour of his own birth, and wish for death to cover his shame. But how shall I escape myself? And, alas! my poor sister! how shall I shelter thee from the disgrace which is thus brought upon thee? If Henry can endure my hated name, tell him I shall feel horrors not to be borne till I know the state of his injured parent. I have other griefs settling in my soul, but may not give them vent. As for him—the atrocious! the unnatural!—I yield him to conscience and justice;—and yet, alas! he is
my

my father!—Might he not escape?—Forgive and pity

“The distracted

“CHARLES STUART.”

“N. B. I will remain here till I have your answer, then fly to quarters.”

In the progress of perusing this letter, the colours of compassion and indignation alternately mounted, and sometimes mixed in Partington's cheek. These were succeeded by tears that gushed from his eyes, and that almost to the drowning of his voice. “Insufferable young villain!” said he, “this is not to be endured!”—Then darting a look of rage and contempt—which no features could more forcibly express than Partington's, sharpened by that ironical asperity which was edged at every word and intonation with the most cutting energies—“Here,” cried Partington, “listen to the sentiments of that scoundrel of a son who has run away from his amiable fire in his last distress, and left him in confinement in his way to an ignominious death.”—He then read the letter aloud, sinking only the

the last sentence, mentioning Sir Guise's being suffered to escape; thundering in the ear of Sir Guise every expression that manifested the deep sense which Charles had of his father's villainy. And at the end, seeing him unmoved, or, if moved, only from the impulses of fear, "Behold," said Partington, "how the good Baronet's tender heart bleeds at the wounds which his ungracious boy has inflicted! What sensibility! What affliction! What exquisite feeling! Honest, conscientious gentleman! He will hardly survive so unfilial an attack. It will go with him to the gallows!"

The reverences which Partington made, during this address, were repeated at every sentence, till, at last, they arrived at almost Persian prostration. Then, desiring the Baronet and his two friends would be kind enough to rise from the straw, and hold themselves in readiness to be tried, condemned, and executed, he left them in the charge of young Atwood, ordering True George to follow him into the house.

CHAPTER XII.

THE good Partington, to the infinite joy of his honest heart, found the Fitzorton family still rejoicing at the unexpectedly rapid recovery of Sir Armine. Olivia had just prepared for him the third cup of tea, and was going to place it on a waiter to be conveyed by a servant, when this singular man snatched it from her hand, declaring, "she was an infamous little villain to suppose any other person should carry it the old rascal but himself, when he was within reach of him."

"That trouble is unnecessary," said Lady Fitzorton; "Sir Armine feels himself quite stout enough to finish his breakfast below; and that you, Olivia, may be out of pain as completely as ourselves, your good father gently turned me out of his apartment just now, saying, he would be my substitute. Hark! I hear them coming." The door was opened, and discovered the truly reverend and honourable Sir Armine walking into the room with a not infirm step, and rather affectionately embracing, than leaning upon his friendly

friendly supporters, Henry and Mr. Clare. "There," said the old gentleman, dismissing his attendants by spreading his arms to their extent, "Armine's himself again!" Then taking every one by the hand, he acknowledged their tender care, assuring them of his freedom from pain, except a kind of confusion in his head from the severe blow he had there been saluted with, probably by the hand of Sir Guise Stuart.

"No doubt!" exclaimed Partington, "your obligations to that very worthy gentleman are so great, that I hope you will have no objection to attend him and his brace of myrmidons to the Justice, who, I find, resides three miles on our road to Adsell Hall, scarcely a furlong out of your way,—though, I trust, you have enough of Christian spirit in that old abominable body to travel to a court of equity as far as the Alps, in order to do your country the service of committing so very deserving and amiable a personage to the halter. Indeed, as you are also in the commission, I do not see why you should not pass sentence on the gentleman yourself:—but, perhaps, you may think it right to pay your brother justice
the

the compliment of hanging an honest man found in his district. I expect, at any rate, that you will be well enough to see him swing; for, although you have given the death designed for you the slip, there is, I think, malice prepense enough in the attack to hang the assassin; and, to tell you the truth, if I did not think so, I should scarcely forgive you for recovering;—and if you are of a different opinion, I must really beg the favour of you to die off as fast as you can, that justice may be satisfied.—I suppose,” added he, “you know that the worthy trio are under my custody, and refreshing themselves at this moment in an unroofed barn, with some unpeppered, unsalted, and unbuttered water-gruel, ready to march at the word of command.”

All the time Partington was speaking, poor Jane Atwood then happening to be in the room and behind Olivia's chair, was obliged to hold it fast to support herself from falling. Henry, from contrary causes, but productive of the same effects, was in a scarce better condition. They were all, however, soon relieved by Sir Armine, who, taking a paper from his pocket,

pocket, at the sight of which Olivia's cheeks took the hue of the deepest crimson, thus addressed his friends :—" I will read a paper of proposals to you, my friends, and must own it has wholly decided me as to what should be done with the prisoners. I need not inform you that it was drawn up by that blushing little girl of ours, and, as I believe, placed by Lady Fitzorton upon my pillow."

" Why, what wickedness has the little rascal been at now ?" quoth Partington.

" You shall hear," replied Sir Armine ; and then putting the paper into Lady Fitzorton's hand, desired her to read it for the good of the company, which, while Olivia sat between the palpitating Henry and Mr. Clare, she did as follows :—

" To Sir Armine Fitzorton, Bart.

" My dearly valued friend, and almost father,

" But that the news, the heartfelt news, of your being recovered ;—but that the assurances of my soul-elected Henry, promise us the sight of you in a few hours ; I should neither have the will nor the power to write

to you on the proposed subject of this paper, which is in behalf of your bitterest enemy! not for his own sake, you will readily believe, but as his public disgrace must, inevitably, be connected with the public character and private feelings of far more worthy persons."

"There's a little villain for you," said Par-
tington, drawing the back of his hand across
his eyes.—Lady Fitzorton went on:—

"Had any thing fatal happened from the
merciless being for whom I now plead, Heaven
only knows how any of those persons would
have borne the blow! Surely, it would have
broken all our hearts."

"Dear angelic girl!" cried old Clare,
pressing her to his bosom—"were any thing
to break thine, the strings of mine would
crack, I'm sure!"—Lady Fitzorton proceed-
ed:—

"But, as it has pleased the great Restorer,
in pity and in love, to give you to us, certain
I am, that the only resentment your all-noble
nature is capable of feeling against the cruel
author of your sufferings, will be confined to
himself alone, and no way extend to the in-
nocent,

nocent, because they happen to be his offspring."

"Sweet Olivia!" said Lady Fitzorton, taking one of her hands.

"She is *my* child! my own dear daughter!" cried Mr. Clare proudly. "Think of that!" eagerly snatching the other hand—"Thanks be to God that gave her to me:—she is *my* daughter!"

"Go on with the letter," said Sir Armine, coughing to conceal his emotions.

"On this principle I dare to sue even for Sir Guise Stuart;—since the shame and sorrow of his children,—the excellent Caroline, and her amiable brother,—would be doubly heaped upon them. Were you to carry even your just vengeance against this misguided man, I tremble for the effect of a public prosecution on *their* minds."

"Good and gracious Heaven!" ejaculated Henry; "is it possible!"

"Ah! permit me, dearest Sir Armine, to place myself in their situation while I plead their cause. I feel, that the reflected infamy of Him who gave *me* being would kill me!"

“ My child ! thy father shall never dishonour thee,” said Mr. Clare, the proudest chords of his heart finely touched,—“ never ! never !”

“ The gentle Henry too, dearest and best of men ! would lament the fate of his drooping friend ! He would join my sympathizing woes for the blushes and tears of the sweet Caroline !—I cannot support it.”

“ He must be more than human that can,” cried Henry.

“ As I am neither more or less than human, I’ll hear no more of the vile hussy’s nonsense, unless the letter is read on without stoppings,” said Partington, blowing his nose violently.

“ Even our poor Jane would be afflicted, and Sir Armine himself, whose heart is the throne of all that is humane and honourable, would endure a pang it never ought to feel, were even this hardened creature to pass his days in a prison after the ignominy of a public trial.”

Jane Atwood’s whole frame quivered at the idea ; and had not her hand still clung to Olivia’s chair, she must have fallen.

“ Zounds

“Zounds and the devil! you determined murderers! have you almost done?” cried Partington,

“Hem! hem!—Read the last passage,” cried Sir Armine.—“Thank Heaven we are coming to the last passage.”

“In the names therefore of his unhappy son, the denizen of your Henry’s bosom, of his duteous daughter, in whose honour and felicity I feel a sister’s interest; in that of beloved Lady Fitzorton, and of my own adored father, whose compassionate heart, I am sure, goes with my petition, I implore that Sir Guise, with all his crimes on his head, may be suffered to depart, if it be possible, without his foul deeds, or at least his foul disgrace, reaching the ears of his innocent and outraged daughter. Let Henry and his friend owe this—through your abundant clemency—O! my second father! to the intercession of

“Your duteous and ever grateful

“OLIVIA CLARE.”

When Lady Fitzorton was preparing to read, Olivia would have quitted the room,

and starting up, had got to the door; but Partington caught hold of her and exclaimed, "Stop! you insufferable scoundrel! stop!—I knew you had done something to be ashamed of, but there's no escaping. I am an excellent hand to catch a thief, and to keep him too:—witness Sir Guise and Co.!"

For some time Henry had manifested emotions almost beyond his nature to endure. Generosity, goodness, compassion, and every other quality that exalts Humanity, in those happy moments, when every principle is alive, and every passion moving to virtuous impulse, reflected from the conduct of Olivia, struck on his heart, well fitted to receive such distinguished guests; at length, dropping on his knees, "O teach me!" he exclaimed, "teach me how I can deserve such excellence?"

Olivia, who had not till that moment raised her head, which alternately reposed on her father's and Henry's arm, as the proper supports of her blooming merit, now ventured to look up, summoned by a voice to her *indeed* "sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountains," and tenderly returning the embrace
of

of her Enthusiast, she declared, "that although the whole company had, out of all bounds, over-rated common sentiments of Christian charity, she felt herself rejoiced not to have offended; and if there was any merit, it was all borrowed from constant association with those whose conduct was at once her emulation and her example."

"Then, I suppose, the worthy Baronet is not to be hanged this time?" said Partington.

"No," said Sir Armine; "I think I see myself so well, and so satisfied, that I shall take Olivia's advice."

"Why, for that matter," rejoined Partington, "I must own, I too have a letter to be read which seems to strengthen an idea of that sort; and as I plainly perceive my vote to break the honest man's neck will pass for nothing, where a pack of abominable good-for-nothing scoundrels are resolved to save him,—here, Henry, do you give us the contents of this:"—presenting him with that letter from Charles which was before offered to the reader.

It was with great labour that Henry, after many stops, lets, and hindrances, from the overflowings of his own heart and that of the company, finished this epistle. All the passions of his nature had been up in arms for a considerable time. In this last letter, there were some hard lines which pierced him, and him only of the party, to the quick.—The forlorn situation of Caroline, wondering, perhaps, at the absence of her father; the tender goodness of Olivia, the benevolent disposition of Sir Armine, and the dire heart-rending condition of his friend Charles, formed, in his bosom, such a mass of contrary and conflicting passions and principles, desires and duties, hopes and fears, that Henry Fitzorton's situation at this crisis was, perhaps, as truly to be commiserated as at any period, not of his individual, but of the human history.

“Do you, Henry,” said Sir Armine, “for I know you will do it in the best manner, answer your friend's letter—Partington will only interlard it with vagabonds and scoundrels.—No—it will be better, dear boy, in your hands:—You will assure your friend of my
continued

continued esteem for *him*; and that while you are telling him so, his father will be set at liberty."

Jane Atwood here quitted the room very hastily.

"And add, my Henry," cried Sir Armine, "that it shall be by no fault of mine, or my family, or my friends, if the cruel and unprovoked assault is ever divulged to—to—to—his—to Miss—"

Sir Armine hesitated, seeing some paper which had lain on the table tremble in Henry's hand, to pronounce the name of Caroline or Stuart. He therefore only added, in an under tone, heard only by Henry—"you know who I mean, Henry."

"And while Harry is thus employed, you, my dear Sir Armine," observed Lady Fitz-orton, "you may go with me, if you please."

They did so, and while they were absent, Partington, being now left alone with Henry, exclaimed, "What, you vagabond! is to be done now? Our plan, you see, has been overturned, and there is no time for another. You cannot be carried off again. This forced

match, I fear, after all, must take place: yet who, but such a fellow as you, would require *force* to possess such a darling little villain as Olivia? What do you intend?"

"Would I were dead, and buried!" ejaculated Henry, "or would I had never seen!—Indulge me, dear Mr. Partington, by leaving me alone a little. I will endeavour to do what I ought—what is right. Order the carriages as desired.—Some delay will, of course, happen after this accident—at least, one day! and if I gain another day, I shall have time to think and to decide."

Partington, who, amidst all his singularities, was never troublesome, and who, indeed, knew not how to advise Henry, whom he sincerely loved, left the room, saying only, with visible signs of anxiety—"All I know of a certainty is, that you are one of the most atrocious young scoundrels I ever saw; and, therefore, I wish with all my soul I could see you happy, without seeing others who are as great vagabonds as yourself miserable."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE letter which Henry, after he had recovered himself, wrote to Charles, contained all the generous sentiments his father dictated, with every grace they could receive from eloquent expression ; but they were mingled with others that betrayed a disordered and almost distracted mind, but which would become intelligible to Charles, in addition to his father's kind commands. He told his friend, that nothing but rocks and precipices were before him ; that all the powers of gratitude, duty, love, friendship, honour, pity, hope, and despair, were at once warring in his breast ; that whichever way he moved, some of these were his constant attendants in opposition to each other, with regard to his power of reconciling them with his peace, and agreed only in one determined point—a general confederacy against his happiness ; for that even Hope herself, which, in any other man's situation, would bring healing on her wings, seemed to make her visits of a moment to *him*, only to shew his state was so forlorn, so destitute, there was no rest-

ing-place whereon she could set her foot; and that she was compelled to leave him to Despair.

“ Ah! my dear! dear friend! and partner in grief!” observed the unhappy Henry, “ the firebrands of hate and animosity, which our affectionate care, joined to the goodness of Sir Armine’s heart, had almost extinguished, are by this baneful rencontre and its effects kindled afresh, and must consume you and your beloved Olivia, Henry and his adored Caroline in ashes.”

He then implored the advice and assistance of Charles, without the slightest expectation that either could be availing! He ran on to some length in a state of incoherence that entangled the design, and obscured the sense with which he began; and, in fine, discovered that his enthusiasm threatened to hurl Reason from her throne! He then recurred to that last dire refuge of the desperate, and argued the point of life and death by his own hand, with a casuistry so subtle that he had almost persuaded himself suicide was the only virtue left him to perform.—“ This way only,” said he, “ can Olivia escape a man, whose heart
is

is for ever alienated—for ever possessed by another! This way alone can my friend avoid the misery of seeing the woman he adores in the arms of another.—This way, too, shall he be dissolved from his everlasting oath, and die faithful to the vows of his heart.”

After a long indulgence of this phrenzy, he took the path which led to the contrary extreme, where duty to his father, and admiration of the tender virtues, as well as tender pity for the affection of Olivia, convinced him, though his days were to exceed those of the longest liver upon earth, he ought still to wish their prolongation, that he might reward so much benevolence, beauty, and goodness. He concluded the epistle by confessing, his whole soul was in the state of this globe of earth, when all its materials were discordant atoms, and not having suffered his passions or his imagination, intemperate as they were, to extinguish, for more than a moment, those heavenly sparks which his principles had lighted up, and which his education had fostered in his soul, he ended with a prayer, that the Power who called into order a world, and perhaps

perhaps myriads of worlds, from anarchy, would deign to bring his deeply-distracted mind from its present chaos !

The unfortunate writer of this farrago having addressed, sealed, and dispatched it, felt an impulse, he could not but indulge, to join the party now assembled in the barn. He there found Sir Armine and Lady Fitzorton, Olivia and Mr. Clare, who had been interrupted in their way thereto by a little adventure of Jane Atwood's.

The reader may recollect the latter of these persons left the room suddenly, the occasion of which was this :—Finding, through the benevolence of Olivia and Sir Armine, that her still too kindly-remembered Sir Guise would receive no farther hardships, and conjecturing she should incur no censure by a little anticipation of the intended clemency, the poor girl, obeying the softness of her heart, which told her, that Nature insisted on her dues of daily bread, as well in her guilty as innocent subjects, had ventured to gain one of the waiters over to her wishes of administering something to eat and drink more nutritious
than

than the bread and water which that vigilant disciplinarian, Mr. Partington, had permitted to be set before them since their captivity. Having seen her brother, therefore, safe at his own breakfast, and True George, whose heart, on this side a breach of duty, could deny her nothing, fixed as his substitute, she had passed the first centinel, namely the aforesaid George, and had got with her basket of provisions to the barn door, and was just giving orders to the waiter to take it to the prisoners, when Sir Armine and the rest caught her in the fact.

It is not easy to conjecture the ingenuous distress and embarrassment of Jane Atwood. She entered upon her defence in so very lame a manner, that her offence would have been extremely aggravated had she not found a better advocate in Olivia, who, with honest energy, declared, she should have done the same, or worse, had she reflected on the circumstances of the poor wretches; "for I do not think," said she, "I could know the wickedest creature upon the earth; no, not my father's murderer—though the very thought of
him

him would nearly murder me too—no; I am positive I could not let even him die of famine while I had charge of his life, and power to administer to those bitter wants which would make him incapable even of repentance in his last moments.”

“ Take that basket, George,” said Sir Armine, “ and carry it to the party who are in need of its contents—or no—stop,” continued he, “ I have a thought may answer the purpose better.—Here, Jane, do you carry this into the house, and in a room apart from that which we occupy, order a proper repast to be prepared for the persons you intended to relieve; and see, good girl, that it be done immediately.”

Jane, bursting into tears, could answer to this kindness only by them, and several bows which George made for her, saying, “ Their honours saw the young woman was not well.” George then took hold of her arm, and conducted her into the house.

It was at this moment that Henry arrived. Sir Armine undertook the explanation so much to Olivia’s honour, that Henry, incessantly

fantly warmed by instances of her excellent disposition, felt it was, if not the conquering, the resistless moment, and with violence protested he was sure she must be an angel. "No," replied Olivia, putting her face close to that of Henry; "alas! no angel, but a mere mortal, who considers that the poor wretch, bad as he is, gave birth to Charles and Caroline, of whose inestimable value we are both conscious."

Thus perpetually did Olivia promote the cause of others, and counteract her dearest interests! At the displays of her character and conduct, Henry often glowed with such admiration and gratitude, that he could have been proud to have flown with her to the altar; but then her conversation so frequently brought back the image and virtues of Caroline to his mind, that she was, in a manner, necessary to his looking on that altar as the place where, should he yield his hand to Olivia, he must at the same time sacrifice his love, his fame, his friend, his honour, and his virtue!

CHAPTER XIV.

SIR ARMINE, with his family, now entered the place where the proud, crest-fallen Sir Guise, and his infamous accomplices, were degraded; and, advancing within a few paces, stopped short.

For a moment we too must pause, good reader, to converse in a friendly manner with one another. Peradventure thou hast formed great expectations of this meeting of the two Baronets: thou mayest suppose that the injured Sir Armine, after much triumph over the captive Sir Guise, will dismiss him with all the pride of a conqueror. If thou art of a sanguine complexion, thou wilt prepare for the grand sublime of some great action, accompanied by all its verbal pageantries; and if of a phlegmatic turn, thou wilt be dissatisfied if any thing be said or done beyond the barren limit of thy own cold nature. Either way, if thou art deeply read in fastidious learning, thou wilt be disappointed in this transaction, which consisted—after a moment's delay to beg Lady Fitzorton

Fitzorton and Olivia would apprehend nothing—in the offended party going up to the grand offender, and with his own hand unbinding his legs and arms, beckoning to George and his son Henry to do the same for Miles and David Otley.

The contrast exhibited in the two Baronets at this instant was such, as a delineator of the human character has seldom an opportunity to observe. The awful and superior majesty of an insulted and innocent man giving liberty to a base clandestine enemy, who, though nearly dead to the excesses of conscious infamy, seemed almost to wish that the cords thus loosened were drawn tight, even to strangulation, round his neck.

Sir Armine pointed to the door, and signified, by sufficient tokens, that the path to the Abbey, or wherever else he might desire to take his way, would not be obstructed: but Sir Armine uttered not a word till he gained the court-yard, that led from the barn to the house, and then, in a voice that penetrated the heart of every hearer, he said—“Attribute, thou Implacable! thy undeserved enlargement

largement to thy children and mine, whose virtues are a balance—and surely higher praise cannot be given them—for vices such as thine !”

Disdaining to cast a look on the subordinate engines of baseness, Sir Armine, with his associates, went into the house, but he had scarcely passed his foot over the threshold before Jane Atwood and True George came running into the passage, by another door, to say, that “an armed multitude were marching on from the neighbouring villages to revenge the injuries committed against their respected patron, Sir Armine, by their detested tyrant Sir Guise.”

“He must be protected,” said Sir Armine. George flew to his protection swift as the word. Young Atwood, who was at hand, did the same. His sister repeated Sir Armine’s orders till Adfell woods re-echoed—“Sir Guise must be protected.” Henry Fitzorton forsook, for a moment, the side of Olivia to attempt the rescue of the father of Caroline. But the mob, who now poured into the inn-yard, covering the
fields

fields adjacent, were at first too clamorous to be opposed—they had heard the story of the assassination with all the extravagant additions of a travelling tale; and here, as at the abbey and castle, Sir Guise being an object of general hatred, and Sir Armine of as general love, even the entreaties, explanations, promises, and threats of the latter, could not prevent the enraged multitude from hooting, pelting, hissing, hustling, buffeting, and beating the former out of the inn-yard; and in despite of Henry, Partington, young Atwood, George and Jane, who followed the rabble from one end of the parish to the other, their unmitigated fury was pursued by the assailants even to that part of Adsell forest where the postillion told them the attack was made. At that memorable place, had not the shrieks and at length the swoons of Jane Atwood, like a guardian genius, broke the raging passions, by exciting the general pity and humanity of the mob to restore a beautiful young woman whom some of them supposed was the Baronet's daughter, Sir Guise, Otley, and

and Miles, would have breathed their last on the identical spot where they had begun the assassination.

Thus implored, they suffered at length the miscreant and his minions to escape, and the mob turned all their attention to the young woman, who,—after recovering, and being assured, by the generous George, in a tender whisper, that Sir Guise had got off alive,—was carried by the people safe back to the inn. Here they met Sir Armine, Mr. Clare, and the ladies, coming in consternation to know what had been the result of the affray. Olivia seeing Henry, for whom she had felt terrors not to be described, fell into a state scarce less pitiable than that of Jane. But at length the adventure of the running fight was explained, the company took some more refreshment, and the good surgeon telling Sir Armine, the sooner he left the scene of agitation, and got to his own quiet home, the better, Partington ordered the horses and carriages to be brought out, and Sir Armine, his friends and family left the eventful inn.

But they had not yet arrived at the land of peace; for the same multitude which had dismissed Sir Guise with so many marks of disapprobation, would not part with Sir Armine without greetings of as violent applause; they hung on the wheels of his coach, took off the horses, and drew him along in triumph; they ran after him for some miles, crying out "God bless Sir Armine!" and at last stopped the carriages and horses, insisting that Partington, Henry, and all the retinue, should join them in three cheers, to the honour of Sir Armine. After which they gave a universal huzza, and suffered the vehicles and horsemen to proceed.

CHAPTER XV.

THE rest of the journey was performed without any farther interruptions, except that towards the end of it Sir Armine complained of uneasy sensations in his stomach, which, he said, he was apprehensive were the forebodings of his old constitutional enemy, the gout.

At length, however, the antique towers and gothic avenues of Adfell Hall appeared in
view,

view, and the evening fun was playing its beams on the romantic scenery around, at the prospects of which different sentiments were produced in the minds of some of the company.

In the fine eyes and complexion of Olivia, were written all those tender perturbations, hopes, and fears, which till now the late occurrences had banished from her gentle bosom, but she said nothing. "It was at the altar of that old chapel, my child," observed Mr. Clare, "that your grandfather was made the happiest of mankind.—O may the heirs to his fortune, the fair domain that is now opening upon us, succeed to that richer possession, his unspeakable felicity! for I know by my own heart—widower as it is, and *wholly* bereaved as it would be but for thee, Olivia," the old gentleman tenderly drew his daughter towards him, "I know there is no earthly treasure so invaluable as a chaste and virtuous companion—such as, alas! I have lost!" Mr. Clare brought his daughter's hand from his bosom to his lips, and impressed it with a kiss that was moistened with a tear,

tear, while Olivia gently lifted her other hand to the old man's cheek, and wreathing her arm by degrees round his neck, repaid the precious drops which he had shed with tenfold interest.

Meantime, Sir Armine forgot every former pain in the supremely happy reflection of still possessing the excellent Lady Fitzorton, whom having viewed for some moments with conscious pride, he exclaimed, with an energy that spoke the soul—"The years of that lovely girl almost thrice numbered," pointing to Olivia, "hast thou been the blessing of my life!"

The coachman was ordered to stop at the top of the hill, from whence Adfell Hall park and chapel were discovered, and where these little pictures of family happiness were drawn. Henry and Partington had rode on one side of the road, keeping even with the coach; and the post-chariot, in which were George and Jane, to whom her brother was now added, drew up on the other, more in apprehension of Sir Armine's returning sickness,

than in expectance of those sweetly tearful sensations which welcome the pains, if pains they may be called, of a tender heart. The whole group, therefore, characteristically felt the scene. Henry, who had witnessed it from the time of Mr. Clare's paternal prayer to Sir Armine's last reflection, and to whom the sight of the chapel brought back every agonising anticipation, counterfeited but ill the smile he gave to Mr. Clare when that good man wished him all the bliss that both their houses had experienced in marriage. Henry bowed acknowledgment, but, observing the evening dews were falling, advised his father to avoid them by suffering him to order the coachman and postillion to drive briskly to the Hall. By this manœuvre he escaped the severity of any farther trial of his feelings. True George wept and laughed by turns; young Atwood bore him company; but Jane was so overwhelmed with the conflicts which preceded, that, when the carriages were again in motion, she felt relieved. Some minutes before, Partington, whose
sensibility

sensibility had been variously excited, turned his horse from the coach again into the road, swearing, "that Sir Guise and his worthy pair of friends were archangels to Sir Armine and his family, who, he plainly saw"—here he rubbed his eyes, which were not dry—"had a desire to blind him first, and then to break his heart; for which, amongst a multitude of other obliging favours, he considered the whole body, men and women, as a set of d****d good-for-nothing assassinating caitiffs and scoundrels."

At length they arrived at the place of destination. The sun had just made "a golden set;" the villagers were assembled on the green which neighboured the hall, to pay their first salutations; and the rural bells joined merrily in chorus to the notes of universal welcome. It was, indeed, considered by the inhabitants of the surrounding parishes as a jubilee, which had been expected by the peasantry and husbandmen for many years: Their lovely patroness was now come amongst them, not only to take possession of her

ample inheritance, but to share it, as they had often heard, with a youth generous as herself, and from whose liberal regulations they expected to derive all the benefits of honest industry, and of easy servitude; for it had been given out that if the young 'squire and his lady liked Adfell-Hall, they were to fit it up for their general residence; a point of the utmost importance to the sons and daughters of poverty. That nothing on their parts, therefore, might be wanting, whatever could demonstrate respect, gratitude, and zeal, were now to be seen and heard.

A village poet, whose metre was looked upon, by the rustics, as the sublimest effort of human genius, presented a gratulatory ode, in the last stanza of which he promised an epithalamium when the young couple should attend the altar of Hymen. A rural musician, whose untutored melody was at least a match for the uncouth rhyme of the afore-said bard, composed a cantata, which was to be rehearsed the evening of the arrival, but to be played to a full band, immediately after

after the ceremony—the barber having promised his flute, the huntsman of a neighbouring 'squire, his horn, and the clerk of an attorney from the next market-town, his fiddle, the composer himself literally *executing* harmony on the bassoon. Six of the village maids were selected, by sage matrons, to twine chaplets of jessamine and roses; cudgel-playing, single-stick and cricket were also in preparation, and a variety of other honorary tokens of duty, good-will, and homage, were designed to celebrate the nuptials of Henry Fitzorton and the blooming lady of the manor.

These innocent testimonies of rustic satisfaction were highly acceptable to all but Henry, who, having now had leisure for retrospect, looked upon every preparation as a garland to decorate a grand sacrifice, of which *he* was to be the principal victim. And yet matters had now gone to such length, he saw no way to escape. His obligations to Olivia, whose virtues were ever under his eyes, multiplied every hour. His obstacles to the hand of Caroline were

increased tenfold within the last two days; even though, before, they did not seem to admit of augmentation. All that could be expected was a little delay, that his father might recover his late fatigue before he entered on a fresh course of tumultuary happiness; and even this, Sir Armine determined, should postpone the festivity only twenty-four hours.

There was a rough honesty in the good Partington, who, albeit, unused to the soft parts of speech, had as much nicety in feeling, as bluntness in expression. He was often on the point of at once extricating Henry by unfolding his situation to Mr. Clare, or even to Olivia herself; for he entered into the spirit of Henry's objections; and though he did not see the least possibility of his friend being united to the woman he loved—the daughter of the villain, or, as Partington himself called him, the worthy gentleman who would have murdered Sir Armine—he could look for nothing but grief and disappointment in marrying one whom he did *not* love,
even

even though it was the charming Olivia. But the business of interference was difficult and delicate; and after long deliberation, he once more took Henry aside to say, "My dear scoundrel, I can do you no good, and I do not choose to run the hazard of doing you any harm; so to-morrow morning I shall take myself back into my own country, attended by young Atwood, whose family are now in suspense about him. All I have to observe is, that if you have no better means than a second elopement, and wish for an asylum, I can lock you up in my cellar; in descending to which there is a well-stored pantry, and there you may remain, you unhappy villain, till you have drunk and eat me out: for I must confess, as love is not on *your* side of the question, you would do better to live with "toads in the vapour of a dungeon," as that incomparable old scoundrel Will Shakespeare expresses it, than with the fairest and finest girl in the world in a palace; for in that case, to my firm thoughts, Olivia is no better than an oyster-wench."

With this sentiment he left Henry, forlorn and undecided, and would have made ready

for his journey, but for one of those unforeseen interventions which, in this world of changes, baffles the limited foresight of man, and sometimes, at a moment's warning, sometimes without it, levels emperors and empires, and every laboured edifice of their power, fancy, and ambition, in that common dust of nature, out of which they, and all that they create or inherit, were formed; proving at once the strength and weakness of mortality.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON the evening of the day preceding the intended nuptials, Sir Armine felt himself unexpectedly faint, accompanied by a slight return of his pains in different parts of the body, but particularly in that where he had received the ruffian's last dastardly blow. He withdrew to his chamber, before the usual hour, convinced himself, and convincing others, that a few hours rest, which he felt he should enjoy, would make him rise more alert in the morning than either the intended
bride

bride or bridegroom. Resisting all offers to have anybody sit up with him, and it having been settled, before he was taken ill, that on this, the last night of Olivia's single state, Lady Fitzorton was to be the partner of her bed, he went up stairs, peremptorily refusing company or assistance: and as Lady Fitzorton saw he was not in a temper of mind to be controlled, she vexed him not with importunity.

But growing worse in the night, he resorted to, as he thought, a bottle of laudanum, in whose powers he had always too much faith; and although in much agony, he was unwilling to disturb any of the family, thinking the disorder would pass away in the profoundness of that sleep which the supposed laudanum, his favourite panacea, would procure. He went so hastily to the closet, where, the day before, he had locked up all his medicines, that the lamp went out; and in this state of darkness and uncertainty, as he was in search of something to hold the laudanum, he unfortunately laid his hand on a cup in which had been mixed up, and

G 5 incautiously

incautiously left by the house steward, a preparation of arsenic and other poisonous drugs, to destroy some rats which had infested several parts of the dilapidated mansion. Anxious to remove the malady which he felt every minute increasing, he resorted again to the medicine-chest, and poured a double proportion of his favourite anodyne upon the dregs, which having drunk, he returned to his bed.

The deadly quality of the poison was for some time overborne by the balmy power of the anodyne, and poor Sir Armine enjoyed a temporary repose; out of which, alas! he was roused at the dawn of the day by sensations of misery that raged through his whole frame. The family were alarmed: they found Sir Armine in speechless agony; at a transient interval of which, he with difficulty exclaimed,—“The laudanum! the laudanum! some dire mistake!”—A shriek from the wife of the house steward, who had taken up the cup out of which Sir Armine had drank the fatal potion, now augmented the consternation by wildly crying out—

“O! why

“O! why did not my husband remove this cruel, cruel cup? His Honour, ladies, has swallowed poison!—This cup, alas! this cup!”—Incapable of finishing the sentence, she fell on the floor.—“Poisoned! Sir Armine poisoned!” ejaculated every one present; “the God of heaven and earth forbid!”

On the arrival of the very surgeon who attended Sir Armine at Adfell, and whom True George, almost with the rapidity of wings, had fetched from thence, medicines were administered, which, after a violent operation of some hours, gave gleams of hope that Sir Armine might be restored, so far as human means could recover him. On the fourth day, by judicious treatment, he could bear to sit up, and saw, by turns, every one of his family in his chamber: Henry was still his constant attendant, and rarely left the bed-side. His beloved hand—for in sickness as in health he was his darling—administered the cordials, and they seemed to acquire new energies from

such ministration. The gentle Olivia too was often at the door, even when it was impossible to gain entrance. The solicitous inquiries of the villagers, after their venerable and reverend pastor and patron, were incessant. In the end, the poison seemed wholly expelled by the antidotes, but had left his general health so much invaded, his frame, even to its stamina, so shaken, his stomach was so torn by his old malignant enemy, and, perhaps even yet, some internal pains from those bruises which a more inveterate foe had inflicted, that the effects of all these evils brought on a complication of ills, for which perhaps, in the most vigorous bloom of man's life, there could have been no established cure, but which must inevitably, even in the firmest constitution, and such Sir Armine had been blest with, have terminated in a manner the most fatal.

The dreaded stroke which was to separate this venerable man therefore from his family came on "with solemn steps, and slow;" but, alas! they were not less certain than if the dire
power

power of the poison had continued to rage : he was in a manner dying daily under their eyes, but happily his pangs were less and less acute. Thus he regained comparative ease of body and tranquillity of mind ; and though assured of death's approaches for some weeks before the " fatal arrow sped," he displayed to all around a rare example of paternal tenderness, patience, and every christian virtue.

When Sir Armine felt his hour at hand, which he expected more than a week before it arrived, he expressed wishes to her whose delight had ever been to obey them, that he might breathe his last at Fitzorton Castle. Thither, therefore, he was removed by slow degrees, and seemed much the better both for the air and exercise of the journey.

What a seducer is the heart ! It again deceived all the Fitzortons and Clares with a false but soothing hope, that Sir Armine might yet be spared to them. And when these fond expectations were imparted to their object, he received them with a smile, which

which shewed his reluctance to damp an innocent delusion which he saw gave them pleasure.

The disorder, nevertheless, in silent depredation went on; and in the evening of the fatal night in which its victim departed, he desired such of the family as were then in his room to leave him. "All of you," said Sir Armine, holding Henry by the hand, "but this young man, with whom I wish to confer; and when I ring the bell, let it, I pray, be considered as a summons for your return to me."—They obeyed.

"O! thou the nearest to my heart!" said he to Henry, "in this its last hour of motion—for the hand of death is outstretched, I see it hovering over my pillow—Thou! for whom it throbs with tenderness unutterable—I charge thee with my expiring breath, and by my parting soul's eternal hope, as soon after my decease as the decent forms of the world allow, not to delay fulfilling the purpose for which the journey that will produce my dissolution was undertaken; for
were

were all other motives annihilated,—and I have pardoned all men—even as I hope to be pardoned—all motives, I say, but those which are due to the best of the aged, and of the young—to my earliest friend, and to his child, those are all sufficient. My own immediate death is not more inevitable, than would be theirs on your refusal. Perhaps, my dear Henry, this point of union has been pressed on my part with too fond a solicitude—beyond a parent's authority. It is my only pang in death. You must place it amongst the faults of my long life ; but it is, alas ! now too late to avail yourself of this error. Guard then with the most religious care from the father, and the child, whose fate is in your hand, the remotest thought of it ever having been necessary for me to *urge* this subject, and conceal yet more religiously the secret attachment you have unadvisedly once entertained for any other woman, more particularly for the daughter of the man who—but I will not insult you by farther mention of that Implacable, whose conduct you must deprecate.

Think

Think that my latest blessing, even if not withheld, cannot be deserved—if—.”

“O! I will be the victim of a thousand sacrifices, die a thousand deaths,” exclaimed Henry, in an agony, “to deserve and to receive that blessing.”

“Receive it most certainly thou shalt,” said Sir Armine, “even if it be not deserved: It will be my duty to give, but it rests with my son to bestow, or to refuse, what will impart to that duty all its sweetness. My son, decide; thy father’s life hangs by a thread, which the next breath may sever.”

Henry was so utterly absorbed as scarce to hear his father’s thrice repeated command, to ring the bell; when, however, he obeyed, the family re-appeared.

Amongst these, we have to number John Fitzorton, who had been, at length, informed of Sir Armine’s extremity, the cause of which however was to be imputed to the accident of the poison. Every one, but especially Sir Armine, trembled at the consequences, should the part that Sir Guise had taken be made

known. From the vow of silence, therefore, which Sir Armine imposed, the family was only in part released. John had rode almost at full speed two days and nights, to take his everlasting leave of a parent whom he loved with a strength and ardour not inferior to that which was borne him by Henry or James, and this ardour inspired him with a speed that even outstripped the rapidities of the former.

But his father's exhausted appearance, the depredation that had been made in his majestic form, the sinking voice, the faded eye, the trembling hand, and the various wrecks of a deathbed sickness, struck the heart of John with a dismay far beyond the powers of speech; but though silence enchained his tongue, the friend, the son, the man, spoke in every feature, flowed, when he *could* weep, in every tear, and agonised in every groan.

"Thou art in good time, my inestimable John," said his father, "to receive my warmest blessing! my warmest gratitude! Thou art in time, also, to witness the happiness

piness with which a christian can leave this world! pleased, and proud, at the thought of bequeathing to it, in his own family, some of its noblest ornaments and examples."

John Fitzorton uttered not a sentence, yet seemed almost suffocated from the powers of speech refused—the relief, even of a single tear, was long denied him. After his first survey of his father's situation, he had hurried round to the left side of the bed, fell on his knees, put his father's hand into his bosom, there held it, and looked steadily at Sir Armine's countenance.

The object of his care here spread forth his arms, as if to illustrate his eulogy by encircling his family, Mr. Clare, and Olivia. In the intermediate space betwixt his life and death, as Henry was leaning over his pillow, a whispered question and reply passed between Sir Armine and his youngest son.

"Is my blessing to be deserved?"

"O! in all things now left within my power."

"All I require is in your power," said Sir Armine.

Henry

Henry seemed eager to say something in reply, but his father prevented, by invoking upon his *obedient* son the last benediction of a dying parent. He then clasped Henry in his arms, beckoning to Olivia to receive him from an expiring father as her future guardian and husband. Then taking up a Bible which he had been frequently reading, and which at all times, in sickness and in health was laid behind his pillow, he pressed it with fervour to his lips, emphatically repeating—"The everlasting benediction of a father be upon ye both!" He then delivered the book to Henry, saying, after an earnest gaze, whose meaning could not be mistaken, "Do thou likewise."

Henry, the victim of a thousand emotions, kissed the sacred volume with an ardour, as if he hoped, from its holy power, the inspiration of fortitude greater than his own; and, in a voice suited to such expected succour, exclaimed, "On the holy bond of these awful leaves do I swear to ratify the commands of a dying parent."

"Enough,"

"Enough," said Sir Armine: "I die in peace."

Sir Armine survived this speech only a few hours; but the reader will permit us to conduct him hastily from the sacred apartment, and quit for a while the melancholy castle of Fitzorton.

CHAPTER XVII.

WE were constrained to leave the unhappy Caroline in various distress, occasioned by the receipt of Olivia's letter, which, as the reader remembers, threw the whole party whom it concerned—and it involved the destiny of several persons—into perplexities, out of which there appeared no friendly clue.

To this, on the part of Caroline, succeeded the secret departure of her brother and father, with an air of mystery which foreboded fresh calamities. In this solitary state, while she was wandering in the thorny labyrinths of conjecture, one of her maids came into
her

her chamber, and officiously related the news which had been brought by a tenant who had passed through Adfell, and was come to settle his yearly accounts at the abbey.

This man had told Dennison, in the heedless girl's hearing, the history of the affray as he had picked it up in the kitchen of the inn, where truth was so far from being the historian, that every fact was distorted; and by the time the good farmer had travelled with it to the abbey, for he made a stop at every public house in his way, it had grown to such a frightful size, that even at Adfell, had it been carried back again in the state it was delivered to Caroline, or at least as related to her by the maid-servant, it would scarce have been known to be the story of Sir Guise's assassination, and of Sir Armine's consequent malady.

The farmer recorded, "That his worshipful reverend Honour of Fitzorton was at the point of death; that all the company, men and women, even to the coachman on his box, were beaten almost to mummies; and that,
instead

instead of marriage, there was, God willing, in all likelihood, to be a burial ceremony of them all.—That his honorable's dishonest landlord Sir Guise, his unhonorable madam, who 'tis thought is lurking hard by, and his hanger-on Miles, as pure a limb of the devil as you should wish to see, and another ill-looking fellow, all jumped out of a wood at once, snapped their blunderbusses, drew their broadswords, and went desperately to work; and being taken by one 'Squire Bartington or Partington, were thrust into an old barn till Sir Armine was dead, then to go before justice, who, it was thought, would order them all for gaol, then to the gallows." To this intelligence the farmer added, "that the young Captain Stuart, brave as a lion's whelp, ran for it, lest he should be hanged too, as one of the accomplices, though he had no hand in it; but like father like son, they say you know; yet he took Sir Armine's part against his own father, whom he thrashed heartily: good that; but, thought I, he should have got another thrasher. I had some notion, Master Dennison, of asking to see the
the

the wicked old gentleman after he had got into Lob's Pound, so save myself the trouble of this journey, by paying my rent to himself," said the farmer; "for though he's an old rogue, under favour, it's no reason I should be one too; but on second thoughts, I remembered to have read in a book, that a prisoner's bond is no bond, a nullification, as they say; so, thought I, what signifies his Honour's receipt to I, now, seeing his body is the lawyer's, and his hand-writing, by the same token, a nullification: another reason was, that I did not like to be seen in company with his Honour after he was a assassinator, for thought I—I am, you know, Mr. Dennison, a pretty bit of a thinker—yes, thought I to I, I may be had up as a witness, or summut or other, and law work often takes a man from business: and moreover, I had my thoughts about me after another fashion: I did not like to give so much money into the hands of a man who was in a hanging condition, seeing as mayhap his family had a better right to it than Mr. John Catch; and moreover there's no knowing,

thought

thought I, to what straits a great gentleman like Sir Guise may be driven to, before he takes to the highway: and who knows, thought I—a keen one, an't I—but if I pay this rent of mine to Master Dennison, who I know to be an honest man, but Miss or the Captain may be the better for it—an honest one too, you see—so thought I, I will e'en seem to take no notice; but after baiting my beast, and lunching a bit myself, I will jog on and let 'em know how matters are here at Adsell; for, thought I, mayhap poor Miss at home knows nothing of what rogues tricks her father has been doing in those um' parts there: So, Mr. Dennison, here I am, here's my money, and here's the long and short of the story."

Had not Dennison been too much occupied by the circumstances to attend whether there had been any auditors in the room but himself, he would, doubtless, have attempted to set the seal of secrecy on the lips of the loquacious maid; but she happened to have just returned from sweeping Dennison's little parlour, when the farmer came; and as the door

door was left on the jar, the girl stood with open eyes and ears, suspended on her brush, devouring every syllable, and the moment the tale-bearer had ended, she ran, without waiting to hear Dennison's comments, to make a report of even more than the whole; first to her young lady, and then to every one of her fellow servants.

Notwithstanding the terror and astonishment which these tidings produced in the mind of Caroline, she saw that much was magnified by the fears of the maid, and allowed for the natural progress of a malicious tale; yet enough of the probable remained, after all reasonable deductions, to excite apprehensions that something dreadful had happened, and that almost every person most near and dear to her was concerned. She would have gone down to the farmer and questioned him herself, but that another of the maid servants at that time came to the apartment with Dennison's dutiful desire, as he expressed himself, to hold some discourse with her. The object of this interview was to conceal with much care every thing that

VOL. III. H had

had been already divulged, and at the same time to frame some excuse for his (Dennison's) journey to Adsell, where the good steward said he had reason to suppose his presence might be serviceable on a little matter of business. "Farmer Spedman has been here, Miss," said the good old man, under great emotion which he laboured to hide; "and I find by him all matters, respecting his honour's estates which lie in that county, are not to his honour's liking; and—and—and—as—perhaps—his honour, and young master, and the rest, he had reasons to suppose, were detained there—or—or thereabouts—and perhaps did not choose to let your ladyship know, because it might vex your ladyship, I—I—I think—it may be right for me to set off and see what can be done—so I desired the farmer to go before, and—and—"

"Dennison," said Caroline, "I see your distress; but I have heard as much of the sad story brought by Farmer Spedman as yourself, and am so far from disapproving your journey to Adsell—for there I understand the unfortunates are assembled—that I am deter-

mined to be your companion, and desire the chariot may be got ready directly; from the next town we can go post. I do not, my good Dennison, suspect, and Heaven forbid I should! half the dreadful events which the ignorant farmer has talked upon; but something, depend upon it, is wrong, and we are both called upon by our duty to set out this instant." Then turning to the maid servant, and saying, "Betty, I shall want your assistance," was hastening out of the room. Dennison, who apprehended more than Caroline, or at least than she thought fit to express, tried many ways to gain permission for his undertaking the journey alone; observing, "that if any thing worse than he hoped had happened—"

"The more unfortunate my father's or brother's situation, the more shall I be wanted," cried Caroline; "and at all events I am resolved to go—so without waste of time or words, I must intreat," said she, with a more peremptory voice and manner than usual, "that the carriage may be at the door immediately." As she was departing a

second time, her brother the Lieutenant made his appearance. The happiness of seeing one of the persons dearest to her soul return alive, gave cheerful presage of the rest, and she was opening her arms to receive him, when that afflicted youth, after violently stamping on the ground to express contrary emotions, too strong for utterance, staggered to a chair and burst into a flood of tears; presently, seeing only the confidential Dennison with his sister, the maid servant being gone out of the room, "My dear Caroline," said Charles, "prepare to leave this pest-house immediately—It is the seat of contagion, disgrace, and shame. It has covered us with blushes—Fly with your unhappy brother this moment."

"I was going to quit it," replied the trembling Caroline; "but wherefore do I see you thus agitated? Where is my father? Alas! I have heard in part; and I see in your terror-striking looks, your trembling lips, and shaking frame, the dreadful news—Yes, let us fly this instant to his rescue."

"His rescue!" cried Charles, "the rescue of an assassin! a common cut-throat! a murderer! Wouldst thou fly to rescue him?"

No;

No; it is to escape his presence—to avoid him for ever. Ah! my unhappy, beloved sister, let us hide our disgraceful heads in some unthought-of corner; for that I am come; and but for the love of thee, no earthly power should have brought me to the accursed spot, which returns on my memory the author of our injuries.”

Dennison saw this was no time to reason down the rage, and almost phrenzy of Charles, or to enter into a detail of questions; falling, therefore, on his knees, while the big drops of sympathy flowed down his cheeks, he implored to be partner of his young master's and lady's fortunes whithersoever they led. While he was yet kneeling, the good father Arthur entered, like a patriarch bearing a commission from the God of gods.

“Rather implore my brother, good old man,” cried Caroline, “in the supplicatory posture you are now in, not to desert *him*, to whom, whatever are his frailties, or even his vices, he owes his existence, and least of all to leave him in misery, and wretchedness, and shame, if such are to be his fate. No!

my dearest, dearest brother ; you will not forsake your father at such a desolate moment. If he is most guilty, he is most pitiable ; if he is in a prison, his soul and body equally call upon us by the voice of Nature to minister calm to his despair. His conscience—nay, his very crimes invite us to him. O ! holy monk ! convince my brother of this. Sir Guise, it seems, has, in the furious extreme of some unfortunate passion to which his nature, alas ! is subject, done a desperate deed, which threatens his life. Exert, I conjure you,” continued she, falling at Arthur’s feet, and catching one of his hands, as Dennison had done the other—“ exert, I conjure you, your pious eloquence to penetrate the filial heart of this good youth with a due sense of what he owes even to an erring parent—convince him that a father *cannot* be guilty beyond the reach of a child’s commiseration.”

“ Rise, dearest Caroline ; I *am* convinced that thou art as good and virtuous as he is vicious and unworthy. But collect yourself, my worthy friend,” said Arthur, “ and be not too rash in deciding any offence beyond the reach

reach of God's pardon; and if not past the reach of God's, surely not beyond that of a son? What offence hath Sir Guise committed?"

Charles incoherently related all the facts as they had happened, asserting, they ought not to be concealed.

Her father's barbarity, and calm, determined rancour, Sir Armine's sufferings and ennobled humanity, her brother's wounded spirit, from the bleeding arrows of hopeless love, lacerated friendship, and a parent's vices, all shot into the bosom of Caroline at once; and, alas! not the least hard to bear, the filial, ever-active vigilance of Henry, so like her own, the agonizing struggle betwixt unconquerable love, his consideration for Olivia, affection for his disappointed friends, and duty to an injured father, who, by saving the almost-forfeited life of Sir Guise, had new claims on his son's obedience;—all these, and a thousand other piercing reflections bore down her spirits to the earth, on which she fell, with a wish, that it were indeed the measure of her grave. She recovered from these accumulated

shocks, only to feel new pangs, for Charles read the letter sent him by Henry from Adfell Inn.

Dennison and Arthur, absorbed almost beyond sense of Caroline's situation, lifted up their hands in silent astonishment; and the latter, on reviewing the wonder-working powers of Providence, thus making the very means that Sir Guise Stuart had used to destroy others destructive of their ends, burst out—"Yes, it cannot be disputed; the Poet is right—

"All chance direction, which we cannot see!"

Caroline now again signified her unshaken resolve to seek her father, and follow him wheresoever distress might pursue him, enjoining her brother, by all the laws of nature and of blood, to do the same. Here a violent noise, as of many voices shouting within and without the house, arrested every one's attention, but before any conjecture as to the cause could be assigned, the tumult increased to a degree that baffled all inquiry, and, indeed, rendered it unnecessary; for Dennison had scarce opened the door, when every servant

vant in the abbey, with a number of those from the castle, filled the room with the contrary cries of—"Spare him! spare his life!—Kill him! kill him! he has murdered my poor master.—Help! help! I shall be destroyed in my own house!—The last exclamation was soon known to proceed from the miserable Sir Guise, at the sudden sight of whom Caroline and Charles stood like statues, motionless with surprise. The buffeting of the multitude, however, filling all the rooms and passages, made it necessary that an active part should be taken by somebody, unless a worse fate was suffered to overtake Sir Guise at the abbey than that he had escaped at Adsell.

Accordingly, the good father Arthur and Dennison—Charles having forced himself from the rising storm of passion at the sight of Sir Guise to leave the house—so powerfully exerted themselves, and produced a calm, chiefly by an observation from father Arthur, on the impropriety, indecency, and impiety of such outrage before a fair and equitable trial had condemned a man, however deeply accused, exhorting them to remember they were English-

men, and, of course, the supports of that grand charter of their country—A BRITISH JURY.

National vanity, whether well or ill founded, is seldom flattered in vain. Arthur's popular bait was instantly swallowed, and anticipating that universal holiday when Sir Guise should be hanged, the mob dispersed in the same manner, and from the same motive, that influenced the insurgents at Adfell. He was rescued, however, barely on this side death, and Otley was left without any visible signs that there remained any life in his worthless body.

But a trial more awful was at hand—the Baronet had yet to pass the ordeal of an indignant son's resentment; indeed, had not the populace driven Sir Guise into this snare he would have avoided it, and had taken precaution once more to that effect, his intention being to pass the first night at Mrs. Tempest's lodge in the forest, where she herself had lain perdue, and to remain there till he should learn whether the coast was clear at the abbey. His hope was, that his son would remain with
the

the Fitzortons, and either not return home for some time, or, as he thought more likely, wholly give him up in silent contempt, which he could have far better supported, and with him the eternal absence of the only being he loved, than thus meet him in the height of his fury. Happy was it for Sir Guise—if disgraceful life can in any position be called happiness—that, as usual, the sweet and merciful Caroline, the humane Dennison, and that man of peace and of every virtue, father Arthur, were at hand to attemper the rage of the Lieutenant;—happy, in this crisis of his fate, was even the hypocrisy of this worthless sire.

To a painter, who has the human passions at the command of his pencil, the whole groupe might, perhaps, furnish materials for a picture of singular effect*: The father of a family returning degraded from the discovery of an infamous action, amidst the groans and hisses of those very persons who would have respected his rank, and even looked up to his

* And some sublime and affecting pencils meditate enriching several of the passions, persons, and scenery of this history.

protection, had not his vices made even the poor and simple hold his wealth and grandeur in utter contempt—a parent ashamed to meet the eye of his own children, or enter, except by felonious stealth, into his own house, once the mansion of honour and hospitality, now the residence of a man so deformed by vice, that the heir to all its ancient privileges would have fled from it as from the seat of pestilence! Behold, too, an injured daughter, checked in her gentlest impulse of embracing a father by a high and holy sense of the dignity of insulted virtue; yet still pushed forward by those impulses to plead a parent's cause and save a brother, from, perhaps, forgetting Nature herself! Behold, too, the venerable and just steward joining in the appeal; and the blameless priest restraining the impetuous arm of the youth from committing the crime of parricide, and pointing to heaven, while he exclaimed—"THERE, young man! THERE alone, in the majesty of justice, resides the Great Avenger!" To finish the scene, behold the abject father, while his trembling minion, happily too contemptible for notice, is stealing

stealing out of the room;—behold, I say, this abject father, as dead to shame, as alive to fear, crawling on his knees, in the spirit of serpent and satanic hypocrisy, to beg the son, when he re-entered the apartment, would pardon offences, which he himself repented of, only in that they failed of success. The humiliated son covers his eyes with his trembling hand, that he should not look upon such meanness; while, raised from so grovelling a posture by the fair daughter burning with her blushes, he suffers himself to be led away by Dennison and Arthur, their wounded souls flashing through their eyes a silent but sublime indignation!

Dost thou not feel thyself relieved, O reader! at his departure? Is not the decent pride of thy nature released from what it endured at the view of cowardice and of guilt, when acting with full power on the heart of man? Yet wilt thou not be consoled to think that in that very guilt and cowardice is shewn at once the allotments of vice and the awful distinctions of virtue?

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE have now briefly to unravel the mazes by which Sir Guise Stuart and Mr. David Otley encountered the dangers exhibited in the last chapter.

No sooner, then, was the Baronet and his two associates released from the fury of the exasperated rabble, whom the reader will recollect were pursuing the culprits after they had received their freedom from Sir Armine's clemency, than the redoubted Valentine, having secured a horse, the other conveyances being still at the inn, set off as precursor for the residence of his dulcinea, Mrs. Tempest, and where the Knight of, by this time, the Woeful Countenance, with his trusty, but less sorrowful 'Squire David Otley, might have arrived without any fresh enterprise or disaster, had not Sir Guise's evil genius suggested the policy of getting into his possession certain dangerous written testimonies of his own and his mercenaries combination to do mischief. He therefore, in an unfortunate hour, advised Otley to go, now
that

that the Fitzortons were absent, to take some moveables out of the castle; but particularly a small box, containing a secret correspondence on several subjects, which neither of the writers were desirous should fall into the hands of Sir Armine, or any of the Fitzortons.

As to what had passed at Adsell, he supposed the time was yet too recent for the particulars of their achievements to have reached the castle, as Sir Guise and his colleagues lost no time in returning from the scene of action, after Sir Armine had permitted them to be set free, and the hissing delays which saluted them on the road were past.

Now it fell out, to the confusion of Otley's calculations, that the identical farmer Spedman, who brought the news to the abbey—where the alarm he spread prevented the good cheer which better tidings or better opportunity would have produced from the hospitable steward—did not make all the allowances that might have been expected for the distress he occasioned; and seeing himself neglected, after discharging himself of so much good money,
and

and so much important intelligence, he repented him that he had brought either news or money. Taking, therefore, his horse, no better treated than himself, out of the stable, he jogged on much out of humour, and finding himself moreover, both hungry and thirsty, he stopped at the village of Fitzorton, at the sign of the Fitzorton Arms, resolving to console himself, where he was sure to meet a hearty welcome for some of the cash that still remained in the yellow canvas rent-bag.

Scarce had he seated himself by the kitchen fire, all the other rooms in the little inn being engaged, and lighted his pipe—which has ever been considered a consolatory as well as companionable instrument, and which, when pipes were the mode angry gentlemen resorted to, as angry ladies do their snuff-boxes, for composure—scarce, then, had the honest farmer puffed away the first whiff of his chagrin, when a general huzza, after three distinct cheers, to the health of the new married couple, assailed his ears. The landlord coming at that instant from the company into the kitchen, was questioned by

by our husbandman, touching the jovial sounds he had just heard.

"Sounds, farmer? why you must know that Sir Armine Fitzorton, our great gentleman of the castle, has a son, the Lord love him! who is this day, or to-morrow, or was yesterday, married to the *famust* heiress, Miss Clare, of these parts. So the young lady's father (by Misses desire) ordered the servants and neighbours to make merry on the occasion—and merry we are, you hear, and you shall be so too! for all comers are welcome to-night at the Fitzorton Arms!—Huzza! huzza! Fitzorton for ever!"

The half-fuddled landlord now carried off the farmer, "nothing loth," to the company, assuring them, he saw he was a fine old Grecian and a lover of the family, and would drink Fitzorton for ever, and no Stuart, an hour longer than he could stand."

"Would he?" said one of the party assembled,— "D--mme—then he is one of us, my boy—come—'tis a nem. con. business. —Charge (all filled),—present (all lifted their glasses to their lips),—fire (all drank)!"

"But

“But what think you, gentlemen,” said the landlord, who had an eye to profit as well as pleasure, “to our following this up with another bumper?” “Aye, aye, come, a sentiment,—d—mme, I love a sentiment! a sentiment is the soul of drinking,—May the castle stand and the abbey fall! What say you to that, gentlemen?” “I say,” said the landlord, “it must be drank.”—“Drank, yes,—but how?” said one: “Marry, out of our hats! upon our knees!” “With all our hearts,” cried one of the grooms;—“Charge, gentlemen.”—“No, no,” said one of Mr. Clare’s footmen,—“No hats, but pint basons,—Landlord—bring in all your cargo of crockery—leap, fly, you brave old youth,” said the landlord, thumping him on the back. “I am flying,” said the host, and ran out. The farmer swore that he would drink the health of every honest man, and the confusion of every rogue on the face of the earth, especially the confusion of Sir Guise Stuart, whom he believed to be the greatest rogue, under favour, as yet unchanged:” Upon which declaration a half-pint rummer of punch was poured out by one of the servants, who
giving

giving for his toast,—“ May every rogue have a halter !” submitted it to the company, “ Whether such a sentiment, as in a particular manner applicable to Sir Guise, should not be a *swimmer* as well as a brimmer ? So, away some of us for that dear rosy gilled ancient boy, who is gone for the crockery—” The landlord, while the man was yet speaking, returned with his wife, maid servant, and waiter, loaded with punch-bowls, sugar-basons, and ale-pots : The toast was repeated and drank, every man kneeling and joining hands with his neighbour. To this succeeded more drinking, a great deal of pleasantry, and as much wit as such associations, whether in low or high life, generally furnish : But the sincere love of the families they served was manifested both by the domestics of the Fitzortons and Clares, and an equal degree of universal execration of Sir Guise, but with reserve’s in favour of Charles and Caroline, the good son and daughter.

Hitherto, farmer Spedman had no possible opportunity,—for there had been no recess from hard drinking,—to mention the sorrowful tidings he

he had related at the abbey ; and the good man, now softened by happiness and hospitality, felt really a reluctance to damp it by unwelcome news ; particularly as he had an intimation the female servants of both the friendly houses were expected to a supper, which was about to enter. And the farmer thought bad news would arrive too soon, even if kept till after supper. Making up his mind, therefore, to the maxim, that bad luck never *can* come too late ; honest Spedman set in for a full and complete atonement with his new friends at the castle, for the ill-usage he supposed himself to have met with at the abbey. With this idea, he joined in the general spirit of the occasion, shook hands with the landlord, and all the servants, as if they had been bred up together, in the same kitchen ; he received the ladies with a salute as they came in, and selected one of the prettiest as a partner ; and when his recollection had wholly left him, begged the lady's pardon, and fell asleep on one of the benches, to the infinite diversion of the whole company. His nasal organ gave forth
norous

morous evidence of solid repose, till the peep of day apprised the party-coloured assembly it was time to break up. The butler observed to the landlord, who would not himself have made the remark, had they drank out the week, even had they drank dry his cellar, "that there was reason in every thing, and that though their masters were absent, servants should be merry and wise." The morality of this sentiment also being agreed to nem. con. save and except the aforesaid landlord, who would have supported a very different doctrine, while he could have supported himself—the snoring farmer was roused, and reminded of the hour.—"So farewell, my brave old blade," said the butler, "you have been as welcome to whatever fare and fun you have found here among us, aye, and your good nap of a brace of hours into the bargain; and so one sweepstakes, one parting bowl to the young couple before we bid good bye; and then to our several dwellings."

The bowl was brought, and soon emptied, and so thoroughly had the whole company entered

entered into the spirit of keeping it up, that there is no conjecturing with how many more good wishes the supposed nuptials would have been celebrated in flowing, indeed overflowing cups, had not the farmer, between the extremes of sleep, intoxication, forgetfulness, and memory, just found enough of the latter to tell the long concealed intelligence, in nearly the substance he gave it to Dennison, attaching, however, many bitter epithets to the name of Sir Guise, and as many hyperbolical encomiums whenever that of Sir Armine was mentioned. It was not without many interruptions they heard him to the end of his tale, and, at last, they all fell upon him for keeping them so long ignorant of their honoured master's destiny: indeed had it not been for the protection of the women, the farmer, who made his escape under their auspices, would have paid dear for his good feasting and mental reservation of the ill tidings.

The detestation they bore to Sir Guise, was now augmented tenfold; but the sentiment of rage they conceived for Miles, and
more

more than all for David Otley, the betrayer of Family Secrets, surpassed all description. It could be equalled by nothing but their love, pity, and regret, for the fate of Sir Armine, on recollection of whose destiny, their late universal joy was changed into as universal sorrow, and they sought the now dismantled castle in the honest anguish of their souls. So genuine is love and hate in the bosoms of the genuine children of nature, and so true is the love or hate of domestics, the criterion of the virtue or vice of the Master and Mistress. Otley's ingratitude forms but the exception which belongs to a general rule.

CHAPTER XIX.

As the Fitzorton servants were entering the castle gates, they perceived the apostate Otley coming with his letter box, out of the house, and suffering him to move a few paces, they beheld the ever-drooping Sir Guise, who was waiting near one
of

of the out-houses to join him. The whole pack opened at once, calling out—"There they are—there are the assassins of our dear, dear—perhaps dead master, escaped from prison! It is both law and justice to slay them—they ought to be torn piece-meal!" And piece-meal they would have been instantly torn, had the feet of rage been as rapid as those of fear. The fugitives were however over-taken in the abbey-yard, and driven into the house bruised and beaten almost to death, as we have described.

The miserable and dastardly heart of Sir Guise, however, permitted him not to rest, even when he was withdrawn to his chamber, where the filial Caroline carried him, and administered with her own hand, every comfort that she was conscious he did not deserve, nor did she forget to dispatch off a messenger for the family physician. Charles, once so necessary to the happiness of Sir Guise, was now become the grand impediment; for he knew what heavy weights might yet be imposed on the feelings of the uncomplaining

complaining Caroline, and he had suffered of late so many pains and penalties from the resisting virtues of his son, that a grand revolution was working in his heart, that is to say, the change of his inordinate affections towards Charles into as extravagant an antipathy: yet as this could not be evinced by any of the open cruelties he exercised upon his daughter, he adopted a more secure yet no less effectual mode of manifesting his hate, viz. in giving it the smoothest appearance—even the appearance of love.

He would have been best pleased, indeed, to have made his escape from the abbey, but as every body had now an eye upon him, and as the additional odium he incurred really rendered it unsafe for him to be seen abroad while his late unwarrantable assassination of a man universally beloved was recent in every memory, he foresaw that he would be better accommodated in his own house than in that even of Mrs. Tempest, as it was by no means certain what the popular madness might effect on the property of a woman or her paramour, or their agents, who were

considered as instrumental in such villany; though it must be owned he was impelled thereto by the artful practice of Miles; but if any mischief should result from it, Sir Guise rather wished it might happen during his absence; for the destruction of the whole world was an object of no figure in his mind, compared with the slightest ill that could befall himself. That the abbey, therefore, might be, while he was thus constrained to do penance in it, a place of tolerable captivity, he caused it to be given out that he felt himself so much indisposed, which was by accident the truth, and it would be necessary for him to keep his chamber, and even to avoid company, as he found it rather oppressive to speak.

His object herein was to escape his son Charles, the shot of whose angry eye he dared not encounter. But this did not avail him, for though it is true he was ill enough in body, and harassed enough in spirit, to keep his chamber, that very indisposition was a motive with the virtuous Caroline to attend him in his hour of languor; nay more, judging from

from the goodness of her own heart, that it would be a cordial to his—the most comfortable, indeed, he could receive—to see his darling son, this duteous daughter, by incessant entreaties, and filial arguments, contrived so far to pacify Charles, as to gain his assent to an interview with his father; and that this supposed cordial might have the greater effect, she introduced Charles imperceptibly, dropping on her knee, at the instant of such introduction, asserting at the same time that the blessing of everlasting consciousness would attend him, if he offered the reconciling hand to his sick and unhappy father.

The reader must have noticed it was a fixed maxim of this truly exemplary daughter, that the duty from child to parent can never end, but with the being he gave, or with its own; although she could make a clear distinction in her mind betwixt the offender and the offence. Her duty to the one, being a parent, was by this pious distinction as invariable and eternal as her abhorrence of the other; and she maintained that the father's throwing off either the virtues

tues of the manly or of the paternal character, was no good warrant for renouncing those of the filial. On the contrary—"I will not allow," would she say to her brother, contesting this point during Sir Guise's sickness, "I cannot allow, my dearest Charles, that either my services or yours admit one moment's relaxation in the whole course of our lives. We may deplore, we may avoid, we may even shudder at the conduct of the unhappy parent now brought by that conduct to the sick and sorrowing bed. Our filial ministrations may lose the sweet bloom which used to embalm them, while we believed the author of our lives was good, and just, and worthy; but a duty is not to die or even to languish, because part of its accompanying delights are taken away. No, Charles—it should survive the grave, and when almost all our hopes are buried, we should have a faithful memory of our impayable obligations to those who supported us in the years of infancy. How often must I repeat, that his great guilt should excite our compassion even

even if it robs us of our tenderness? and we should continue from pity what we began from love."

Thus, sometimes by strength and sometimes by softness, but ever with sincerity, did the charming Caroline plead her own justification, her father's cause, and win over to his side even his worst enemies; at the same time, after many attempts seconded by the good father Arthur, she resisted the resolves even of the firm Charles, who had fully determined never to see or hold intercourse with Sir Guise any more, and whose mind was like his unhappy sister's, torn by parental disgrace, lacerated friendship, and disappointed love. She found means, however, as we have seen, to soften the sternest resolutions of Charles; who, partly by her eloquence, partly by the pious remonstrances of Arthur, and partly by the natural compassion of his own heart, was brought, first to promise he would not quit the house till his father was in a condition to leave the chamber, then to bear the mention of his name, and lastly to endure the thought of an interview.

But though Caroline had done the very thing Sir Guise wished to have avoided, the latter dared not to shew any repugnance; he therefore attempted to make the best of a very bad matter. A tale was to be told, and a point gained thereby, which brooked not delay, and this appeared to him a favourable, at least a possible, opportunity.

Thus, therefore, the baronet began to manœuvre, “This is more than I expected—more, perhaps, than I deserve, my children; for you know not the extent of my offences. Great as is your duty, I fear my imprudence, in one instance, goes beyond your power to forgive. Know that I have done a deed,—”—here a profound sigh, most likely from his heart—“a deed!—how shall I speak of it?” (Another pause and another sigh, heavy almost to groaning, and not less sincere.) Caroline turned pale, and Arthur, who had followed Charles into the chamber, crossed himself.—Charles trembled. “I say,” resumed Sir Guise, “I have been for some time—*secretly*—because I knew it would displease my children—.”

“In

“In the name of God! what?” cried Charles.

“Married!” replied Sir Guise.

“Is that the offence?” quoth Arthur.

“To whom?” questioned Charles, in terror.

“Since it must be known—nay since this very house, which was in the hour of my weakness given to my widow for her life—and as being a woman of a high temper,—she may insist on residence—”

“This house!—a high temper!—insist on residence!—Do not distract me,” said Charles, “but speak.”

“Whomsoever you have thought fit to make your wife, will of course deserve and receive the respect of your children,” said the trembling Caroline; “for Heaven’s sake then, Sir, make us acquainted with the name of the lady we are to consider as—as—as—”

The remembrance of her amiable mother impeded her utterance, and it was long before she could finish her question by repeating—“Whom, sir, are we to consider as Lady Stuart?”

"Mrs. TEMPEST," answered Sir Guise.— He then took shelter from the rage that might be expected to follow such thunder-striking intelligence under the bed clothes, in which he so muffled himself, that had the astonishment and anger of Charles, and the consternation of Caroline and Arthur, been expressed with the voice of a lion, they could scarcely have been heard.

Caroline was stunned, and Arthur shocked, but both tried to pacify and reconcile Charles to this irremediable circumstance. "Accursed is he," observed the good monk, "who putteth asunder man and wife; and although it might be wished these persons had never come together in holy matrimony, they were now bound by a divine obligation, and it behoved all persons—but a son and a daughter in particular—to——"

The good man was proceeding in his harangue, every word of which Sir Guise contrived to hear, when a vehement clamour assailed the ears of the company, as of a person rushing up the stairs and exclaiming at every step—

step—"Where, where is he? I will be shut out of my own house no longer; tell not me of lieutenants or captains, or sons or daughters; are *their* claims superior to *mine*? Alas! too long have ye withheld him from me. I will see him though the congregated earth were to oppose me. Beat, bruised, and in bed! Good Heaven!"

And now this vociferous personage, in despite of the remonstrances and almost strength of Dennison, made a forcible entry into the chamber, flew to the bed-side, caught hold of the sick man's hand, and in a violence which rather overacted the character, called out in all the rant of dramatic affectation, "My love! my life! my husband!"

The surprise of so sudden an appearance, attended by such concomitants, did not permit the company immediately to recognise the speaker; and the astonishment was as much increased as it could be, when at last they perceived the new Lady Stuart, who continued to perform her conjugal duties in the same magnanimous style, without seeming to know any third person was in the room. "How

do you find yourself, my dear husband? Why did you suffer a false delicacy, perhaps, I may call it, an unkind fear of your children, so long to banish your wife? While you were well, I submitted to my hard destiny, and kept aloof, even immured; I bore the imputation of being a wicked woman, rather than subject you to censure from a son and daughter, who you taught me to believe would treat the woman to whom you gave your hand in holy wedlock, with undutiful severity; but now that I find your precious health is in danger, I burst through all idle ceremonies, and setting the whole universe at naught, when in opposition to my love and duty, I am come to insist that you permit me to remain here, and to offer my share in your comforts. No; never, never will I quit this roof, this bed, this hand, till you promise to receive all the services I can give; no power on earth shall tear you from me! nor bolts, nor bars, nor chains of iron! I am your wife, Sir Guise, yes, Sir Guise, your wedded wife, your true and lawful lady, and who shall dare to bar her way? Destruction's in the thought.

She

She then proceeded to string rhapsodies, collected from different tragedies, with which her memory furnished her; and, perhaps, Sir Guise himself began to think she carried it a little too far, for he emphatically desired her to stop, declaring "she had given him somewhat too much of this.—" "My dear," said he to Mrs. Tempest, "meet my beloved children half-way;" then catching his son's eye, he popped his head again under the clothes.

As in duty bound, his gentle spouse obeyed. She begged pardon for her apparent oversight, but was convinced her new relatives would make allowances for that overwhelming sorrow which they themselves shared too deeply not to account for.

Next, with all possible condescension, she advanced towards Charles and Caroline, and made an offer to embrace them. Father Arthur, in the goodness of his heart, earnestly promoting it as a fit preliminary of that domestic harmony he so anxiously desired to see take place: "Embrace, my worthy friends, embrace one another."

The worthy Caroline was so tortured between one sensation and another, that half-willing and half-reluctant, she was just stepping forward to own Mrs. Tempest as her father's second wife, when Charles forcibly pulled her back, grinding between his teeth something which, in the ears of the lady, sounded like the words—abandoned woman! touch her not.

“Abandoned!” repeated my Lady, in a thundering accent, which, did we not know the power of sudden rage, we should have thought rather too violent for a lady under her circumstances: “Abandoned!”

“Be not too severe upon the sinner,” said Arthur: “I have not the least doubt but that now the lady is become the wife of a baronet, and is by this unexpected stroke of good fortune brought into a respectable family and innocent connections, which is more than she could reasonably have expected—she will not only quit for ever her former vile way of life, but be wrought to so thorough a sense of that decency and modesty which becomes her sex, the pure-minded Miss Stuart herself

herself would not have any more reason to be ashamed of her."

A spectator, less interested in the scene than any of the parties then present, would have been variously amused at the winks and nods of Sir Guise, who now peeped from the bed-clothes, to keep down the strong spirit which he saw working in his Lady; and at his signs to Arthur, to hold his peace; but his bride disdained all considerations and consequences. Rowe has so exactly described her situation, that you must suffer me to borrow it for your more perfect idea.

" At first her rage was dumb, and wanted words,
" But when the storm found way, 'twas wild and loud;
" Mad as the priestess of the Delphic god,
" Enthusiastic passion shook her soul,
" Enlarged her voice, and ruffled all her form."

She raved, she stamped, and——SWORE!

Pardon me, ye ornaments of the sex, for painting a contrast to yourselves with all the force it deserves;—*swore*—yes, reader, she did actually swear, that Sir Guise was a poor cowardly fellow to take any pains to shew that he was master of his own house, hand, or fortune—
tune—

tune—that if he, however, was mean enough to be trampled upon by his own children, she, being now his wife, was determined, by the privileges and authority of the nuptial character, to assert herself, and that she was humiliated, disgraced, and ashamed to have given into her husband's miserable plots and creeping schemes to conceal his marriage, and bring his lawful wife into her own house.—“None of your winks to me, Guise—I say you were a poor mean-spirited man, and you ought to blush at all these pranks and fuffes, to do me justice;—get up, for shame get up—and don't play the fool any longer, priihee. And as for you, Mr. Impertinence,”—meaning Arthur,—“if Guise had the spirit of a butterfly he would twist your old babbling tongue out of your mouth.—Don't stand lifting up your eyes and hands at me, you superannuated, canting rascal; for if you do, woman as I am, you shall repent it, I promise you.—In future, I desire your visits may cease at this house, sir. If my husband has not the soul to forbid you, *I do*; and unless I see better manners in that young gentleman, who is now swelling up in that manner, ready

to burst with venom, the less he gives us of his company here, the better. As for the young Lady—don't cry Miss—you are the only decent young body in the house."

Any attempt to describe the situation of the party, consequent on this harangue, would be presumptuous absurdity—because, the tears of Caroline, and the agony of her brother's struggling passions, and the foaming madness of the speaker, and the choaking indignation of father Arthur, and, above all, the unutterable fears of Sir Guise, whose teeth chattered in his head, would baffle the united talents of Shakespeare and Hogarth, and of all the painters and the poets in the world.

Arthur, who first recovered speech, declared, after thrice crossing himself, that she was certainly the devil himself, sent into this world in female shape to punish Sir Guise, as a dreadful example to all wicked hypocrites, and that he did not doubt but her feet were cloven.

"Would that my hands were so!" cried she, furiously aiming a claw at his ears, which were luckily buried in the bushiness of his wig,—

wig,—“ then,” said she, “ there might be some hope that they would cleave in twain that impudent skull.” But, before he had time to reply to this salutation, Charles, whose passions were too often ungovernable, had seized hold of Sir Guise’s arm—the only part of him that was visible, the rest being hid under the bed-clothes—and beginning to drag him forcibly, exclaimed, in a voice broken with excess of passion—“ O thou!—most shameless!—most pitiless!—Why, why am I and this unhappy girl incessantly to be thus dishonoured? And why is it not piety and virtue in a son to relieve his family and the world of such a scourge?”

In a moment Lady Tempest, Arthur, Caroline, and Dennison, whom the clamour had brought into the room, were all employed. The first, without any respect of sex, acted the Amazon, and, opposing force to force, tried to disengage the son from the father.

Caroline entreated, yet was so much struck, that her supplications were feeble, and she went weeping out of the room.

Dennison

Dennison and Arthur drew off Charles by main force into another apartment; and the whole business concluded by leaving Sir Guise and his Lady to a conjugal *tête-a-tête*, which was equally short and decisive. It was, however, a curiosity in its kind, and must therefore be recorded.

After a pause of some minutes, Sir Guise ventured to emerge.

"Aye, you may creep out of your hole, poor trembling wretch—and a fine hand you have made of it.—Did not I tell you so?—You have nothing now but to die in good earnest."

"If you come to that, who was it that overset my plan? But for your damn'd unreasonable passion, and impetuous temper, I had brought you into the house, reconciled all parties to you, and we should have had the abbey to ourselves; for the old priest would have persuaded Charles and the girl to leave us—instead of which, I am now in a worse condition than ever."

"Whatever may be your condition, mine is that of a woman who has the misfortune to be
be

be married to a poltroon, who is afraid to defend himself, or avow his wife! However, here I am, and here I will remain, let who will go or stay, live or die; d—n me if I don't."

CHAPTER XX.

THE heroic lady having said this, she insisted upon Sir Guise's getting up and dressing himself, ill as he really was—"yes, and give orders like *a man*," said his gentle lady, "to your servants for the proper reception of, and obedience to your wife." Her yet more gentle lord was too well experienced in his spouse's tempestuous talents to dispute her commands, and his late miscarriages had so sunk his authority, even in his own eyes, that, instead of opposing to her the power of the supposed lord of the creation, he resigned himself, in the most slavish humility, to what censurers have called the weaker vessel—just adding, therefore, to his habiliments a pair of stockings and slippers, he rose out of his sick bed, and almost lamented, now, with his dear wife,

wife, that it had not proved his dying one. However, he shook himself, and his rumpled robes, two or three times on feeling himself once more on *terra firma*, and actually reeled with weakness and affright. He had, moreover, suffered, from sheer dismay, his beard to grow to a great length: his hair had been long neglected, so that his face was pallid and cadaverous; and he exhibited, at the end of the scene, a haggard, rueful-looking wretch indeed.

Lady Tempest, for so, henceforth, though with the greatest reluctance, we are constrained, by the rights of a *femme covert*, to call her, deemed this no fit object of his bestirring himself to the ordering of her ladyship's arrangements, without any hope of obedience following command. She therefore rang the bell, and directed the servant who answered it, to send the valet with warm water, and the rest of the Adonizing paraphernalia, taking care to say it was for the immediate use of her *husband* Sir Guise, who, she said, was now well enough, thank God! to rise, and would soon be down stairs. Not any rumour
of

of the baronet's marriage having reached the abbey kitchen, or indeed any part of the house, the servant who received this message was scarce less the victim of astonishment than had been every body above stairs; for neither Charles, Arthur, or Dennison had, as yet, revealed the fresh disgrace which the Baronet had brought into the family.

Yielding, therefore, to sudden surprise, whose nature is to stand still, the astonished domestic, who happened to be thus taken unawares, remained fixed at the wonderful word *husband*! Whereupon, the lady repeated the orders, with an emphasis so thoroughly convincing, that, if she was not the wife, she would henceforward let him know she was mistress of the house---the poor fellow took to his heels, scarce giving himself time, or finding breath to stammer out in his exit—"ye—ye—yes—yes—my—my—la—la—my mad—madam."

A second delay happened in the servant's hall, where the lady-struck domestic no sooner arrived, than he threw himself into the steward's great chair, by way of recovering;
after

after which he summoned every adherent of the family, from the under-butler (Dennison being otherwise employed) to the under-scullion girl, prefacing the news he had to communicate by a solemn assurance, "that it would make every one of them run mad." Then, seeing their mouths all opened wide to swallow the threatened insanity, "Sir Guise, is mar—mar—mar—married to—to—to—to that rascal Valentine Miles's con—con—concu—concubine! think of that, fellow-servants!—and has, more—moreover, brought his harlot of a wife into the house!" "Who?" answered the corps culinary,—"that whore of Babylon, Mrs. Tempest, who seduced my dear young lady's young gentleman 'Squire Henry, and gave up her wicked self to Sir Guise, and that Valentine, and perhaps half a thousand others?—Is she to be our mistress, and take the place of the good, virtuous, dear, dead and buried lady whom we all followed to the grave, with our hearts ready to break, and willing to do so that we *might* follow her?"

The

The grievous reflections which followed these questionary exclamations, produced so universal a groan of the spirit, that it re-echoed through all the dreary and subterraneous abodes, and ascended even to the central cupola of the abbey.

Meantime, Lady Tempest, exasperated at the delay in the performance of her first conjugal commands, resorted to the bell again, with a vehemence that broke part of the wires, and left the tassel in her hand. The incessant vibrations which preceded this accident had *more* than the desired effect, for it brought up, not only Sir Guise's valet, but Dennison and Caroline, who, from habits rather of duty than reflection or sentiment, now followed the idea of his being really at his last gasp. They were soon undeceived, by seeing Sir Guise walking backwards and forwards about the chamber, and his lady insisting that every body should go about their business, except her husband's valet. Seeing him amongst the crowd that had mechanically obeyed, she drew him towards her

her by the profuse neckcloth and chitterling, calling him at the same time, "a creeping, lazy rascal;" flapping the door in the faces of the rest, who were thus agreeably repulsed, and were again left to their reflections on the prospect of domestic happiness.

In a word, their sorrows at the entrance of their new mistress into the abbey almost equalled that which they felt for the untimely exit of their first lady out of it. Indeed, the marriage of the one could be exceeded in calamity, only by the burial of the other; and looking, as very truly they might, upon Sir Guise Stuart as the wicked cause of both misfortunes, the servants came, after some farther consultation amongst one another, to an honest resolve to save their character—that common necessity of a servant—by giving warning, before they could be supposed to have received any taint of corruption that might disqualify them for more reputable places. This combination being entered into with spirit, *nem. con.*, many of the domestics sacrificed their month's wages
and

and took themselves away on the instant, others dropt off occasionally, and at the end of the month, the kitchen was emptied even down to a poor limping dwarf, who acted under the scullion as a sort of human turnspit ; but who, being assured that his good name, and of course his good bread, was in imminent danger, hopped away with his brown paper bundle of property, to save his reputation.

The first mover of all this was Robert Irwin the cook, and his wife the dairy-woman. The troubled valet having finished his part of the business of disembruting his master, and certain other ablutions being performed, Sir Guise, in the course of two hours, was humanized, and the suits and ceremonies of sickness, pain and death, being thrown aside, though he had really suffered severely in body and in mind, yet he was still much better in health than any other of his family.

The unhappy Caroline and her brother passed some hours in the company of the good Arthur and the consoling Dennison, but they were in a state of misery too severe to decide what course to take. In a retrospect of her
father's

father's course of life, which the late occurrences had more especially forced upon her, Caroline saw a dreadful history of the past, and an insupportable prospect of the future. Her uncorrupted nature shuddered at the view. So far was she from suffering destruction of that moral principle, which not only guided her actions, but governed her very thoughts, that she admitted not the slightest deprivation of it in herself, nor could her penetrating mind discover it in another, though but an acquaintance, without great pain. How aggravated then must have been this nice sense of rectitude, when she reflected upon the utter extinction of every thing like a moral principle in her father; whose conduct had so often covered her innocent cheek with blushes, as if her own pure heart had, unwittingly, done something which produced and deserved the disgrace of her family?

Charles thought, in the present posture of affairs, it would be a right measure, to expel the base intruder who had trepanned their father into a marriage—but this was overruled

both by Caroline and Arthur, who insisted, that no man living could, with a safe conscience, divide man and wife, while they consented to live together.

Caroline proposed that the abbey should be left to the unhappy couple, and some place of escape be sought for us, "no matter where," cried she, with a trembling voice—"Alas! I have done with choice, save that I feel it necessary to remove hence, since the thoughts of another Lady Stuart, even were she better entitled to that precious, regretted name, than my father's present wife—would be too much, with other deep loads, upon my heart;—O, it would be too much for me to bear—as I ought."—

She spoke, or rather sobbed out the last words on her tender brother's bosom. While the virtuous youth feeling the string jarred, on which hung his own misery, too much like his sister's, in nature as in degree, embraced her with all the sympathies of affection and of woe. Dennison held down his dejected head and kissed their hands, with misery inferior only to their own; and the pious, gentle-hearted Arthur called upon the

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the protection of that Power he adored so truly, and wept aloud; after which, circling his arms around them, as if to afford a shelter, he cried out, "There is a good and just Providence, my children, who will take care of us all."

Charles however, resolving that neither himself nor his sister should pass another night under the same roof with Sir Guise and his consort, the monk, after a short pause, exclaimed in a rapture, as at the acquisition of a lucky idea—"Ye may sojourn at the chapel-house, my children, for a few days, till we see what is best to be done. There is room for four quiet people who love each other; I include friend Dennison in the number—yes, there is space enough to be happy, and though we fare not as the dwellers at the abbey, in what are called the good things of life, we shall there escape abundance of the worst, the strife and discontent, which will surely be found amongst the inmates of those we leave behind us in this lordly mansion—and as to

attendants, fear not our being tolerably served. I am myself not a bad cook, and my Indian boy is both diligent and knowing."

"As to that matter," quoth Dennison, seeming as if suddenly to have recovered his youth, "my young lady and master and your reverence can tell I can bestir myself upon occasion, and do not doubt but I shall have every thing prepared in the little chapel-house and in such good order, that the old furniture shall give a shining welcome, before we have been twenty-four hours its inhabitants."

While they were discoursing thus, a servant brought down word from the new mistress of the house, that Sir Guise and her Ladyship desired to dine private that day, and to pass the evening by themselves, previous to certain family arrangements which they intended in future to make, and which, when properly digested, should be presented to them, to the end, that, whatever rules the *principal* thought fit to lay down, might be

be adopted, and pass unquestioned into domestic laws. Charles and Caroline were therefore to give orders for themselves.

This imperious message, which every one of the family servants refused to carry, was brought by one of her Ladyship's own domestics, who, within the last hour, had called with dispatches from Valentine Miles.

Father Arthur, imposing silence on Charles, returned for answer, that neither he, nor his children, for so he often called Charles and Caroline, were surprized at the desire expressed by Sir Guise to keep out of sight, and that as it was probable certain arrangements below stairs—meaning those of his own party at the chapel-house—would take place before those in agitation above; he, for his part, would advise them to turn their studies from the laws of eating and drinking to those of fasting and prayer, and all the other laws instituted and appointed for the use and performance of wicked sinners who were desirous to be saved.

The servant was scarce departed, before the monk presented one hand to Caroline,

the other to Charles, beckoning Dennison, with a smile, to bring up the rear.

“Come, my dear children, let us remove with all convenient dispatch out of the habitation of guilt, misery, and hardened inscience, and seek refuge in that decent, unobtrusive abode, where peace, honour, innocence, and the merits of a life pure and undefiled, await to receive us.”

This proposition was accepted by Charles, because he felt that his longer continuance at the abbey would probably be attended by events too dire to name; by Caroline, because her poor heart was bowed by sorrows too manifold and mighty to resist or to make any selection for herself; and by Dennison, because the good old man, as he lived at the abbey only to be of service to his young lady and master, so he wished to pass the residue of his blameless days wheresoever their fate or fortune, their happiness or misery, should carry them. Orders being, therefore, given to Charles's man and Caroline's woman to pack up, and bring their different trunks and other baggage after them—they set out
in

in the manner above described, for their small but comfortable dwelling.

They had gone about half way, when Caroline stopped suddenly, and declared she had left something, which none of the keys given to her woman could disclose, and which as none but herself could find, she must beg the delay of a few minutes while she returned for it, observing that she should be wretched in the extreme to know it was in the abbey after her banishment! Without waiting any reply, she ran back as fast as her delicate limbs could carry her, and in about a quarter of an hour returned, breathless, and bathed in tears, yet with a smiling countenance, declaring, that she was much easier for what she had brought out of the house, though she had the misfortune to meet the strange lady in her way, and heard her ask somebody, just as she entered, whether Miss too was of the run-away party? "Yet, do not think, my dear Charles, it was an improper or trifling errand that could make me detain you thus long on the road. No; it was

for what my brother will esteem no less than myself—this precious—precious picture of her—who—O! my God! what a change! what an alteration has this second marriage made in that abbey, which could once boast of the angel whom this little miniature—in her mortality, scarcely mortal—resembled! and on whose honoured head these tresses once grew!”

Turning the picture—she exclaimed, “O! my ever beloved and ever lamented mother! how wilt thou forgive him this last, this greatest of his offences?”

As if jealous and fearful of again parting with it, even for a moment, and to a loving brother who yet seemed wishing to pay it homage, she took it from her own lips warmed with the sensations of her filial heart, and pressed it upon his: while Arthur, who never suffered the mourner to sorrow alone when he was at hand, broke forth into those moving sentiments of Hamlet so truly applying to the present picture;

“That it should come to this!”

These

These and other reflections, in the same train of solemn thought, were interrupted, just as the little chapel-house appeared in view. It was opened by Irwin the cook, the footmen, and all the maid and men servants of the family, who, understanding from the young lady's woman, left in care of the baggage, that Charles and his sister, with the old steward, were leaving the abbey, and as the woman told them, never to return, but to live at the chapel-house till they could suit themselves, had come, in a body, like volunteers, to offer their poor but honest services to their honoured young master and mistress. They protested their humble love and duty with a fervour that denoted their sincerity. One declared, he would serve their worthy honours and the good Mr. Dennison by night and by day, far and near, all the world over.—“Nay as to that,” said another “you know, William, we had rather a thousand times pass our whole lives with some good gentry in hard labour, without fee or reward, than with Sir

Guise and his good-for-nothing Madam for half his fortune." They then, with one voice, supplicated to be received; declaring, that they had all a little modicum hoarded up and got in their late good Lady's days, and which would keep them in comfort, without wages, till it pleased God to bring things about a little; "and for that matter, we had all of us," exclaimed Irwin, "resolved amongst ourselves, to leave our present place before we knew of your worthy honours quitting the abbey; but now we have nothing left there to make us amends for what we suffer—our poor, dear, true, and virtuous Lady Stuart is dead and gone, and another woman, not fit to be named with her, or with any Christian woman, is put into our poor Lady's place, the abbey is no abbey for us, and we will not stay to do another hand's turn!—So pray, good, dear your honours, let us follow and abide with you, go where you may. Do, your Reverence, and Mr. Dennison," continued Irwin, "speak a word for us—pray, pray do, and bid young
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my Lady and the 'Squire consider, that we were all in the family when the true Lady Stuart was alive, and followed her to the grave when she was dead, and we are sure her soul would not rest in heaven, where for certain it is gone, if she knew the doings that were now at the abbey, and that her poor old servants staid in the house when her blessed son and daughter were in a manner turned out of it."

The voice of natural eloquence seldom pleads in vain, for it generally is exerted in the cause of genuine and unaffected goodness. This unexpected appeal, however, produced some generous embarrassment. The affections were strongly touched, but the little chapel-house would scarce have held the supplicants, and as that, in the present moment of indecision, was literally to be the resting place, such a retinue would be inconsistent with their decent and unobtrusive plan of life; father Arthur, therefore, putting on the arch smile which reconciled every thing in a moment, observed, that the chapel itself would be barely sufficient to the purposes

purposes of the accommodation of his own little family, though he would readily give up his monk's bed to them, as a reward for the honourable feelings, which must have dictated their offer of service.—“ And me woud give mine, masser,” cried Floresco, his Indian boy, who had joined the company as he saw them gathered together—“ yes, masser, me woud give my ickle bed, and make up anoder wis my warm blankey and shawl, I brought out of my country, if masser will let good hearts peoples come and live wis us, and we'll be so merry and so glad.”

“ Aye, my noble child of the sun, which, I see, has taught your heart to glow like his own beams, but here is a whole congregation you see.”—

Charles was greatly moved, Caroline experienced emotions peculiar to her character—they were composed of the tenderness of her heart and the firmness of her soul—and she settled the business, by assuring the petitioners, that if they went back to the abbey, and gave proper notice of their intentions

tentions to quit their service, but without entering into any improper explanations, so that all might be done with decency and order, they would probably find her at the chapel-house; at least obtain her address there, should she have left it; and they might depend on her best services and those of her brother to settle them reputably and comfortably in new situations. Father Arthur, Charles, and Dennison, giving their fullest sanction to this measure, the groupe were persuaded to turn back, after receiving the honour to shake the hand of the gentleman, and to kiss that of the young lady. The next morning, however, Robert Irwin contrived to send his sweetheart, Margaret, one of the chamber-maids, with a basket with the best things of his larder, and though all these were rejected and returned, as coming from the abbey, the motive with which they were tendered was not forgotten.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE assiduous Floresco opened the chapel-house door; and Arthur, who to the gravity of a monk adjoined the courtesy of a man fashioned by courts, with a hospitable smile gave that smile in welcome, and by the endearing names of friends and children, had entreated his little train to enter in and be at peace.

But one of the domestics returned in haste, and presented a little packet to Caroline: "I fancy, Miss, this must have been dropt by your Ladyship, as this slip of a card was found with it, and William the footman, who is a scholar, says he knows it is a *piegram* or *cross stick*, which means rhyming verses made upon letters in ladies' names, or some such *gonundrum*; and see, Miss, it begins with C, and ends, lookee, with E, which William says makes out Caroline, which to be sure is your Ladyship, God bless you, and please your honour; there it is, Miss—and I will now go to fellow-servants, who are a waiting for me o' the wood-side."

Caroline

Caroline had begun to outglow the riband that bound the packet, as soon as she saw it, and the hue of confession increased and spread to such a degree before the servant had done speaking, that when she received it, her whole frame attested it was a matter of great importance, coming at such a moment: " 'Tis nothing but a—nothing," said she, " but a—small—little bit—of—paper—and---and---a--kind of—and---a---which you,---brother,---you know---desired me---to---to---to take care of for you."

As Caroline's head, heart, and voice, confederated to betray, were all fluttering at once, the discovery of her situation was threefold; for while her delicate fingers were, as she thought, tightening the riband round the paper, they, in reality, were loosening it at every turn, and being thus detached, a little engine of mighty power, in cases of affection, known by the name of a locket, dropt from the paper, and was caught on its way to the ground by Charles, who instantly recognised what it was, to whom it belonged, and from whence it came.

That

That the reader may be in the secret also, he is to understand, that this locket, containing a braid of Henry's hair, was, in the happier days of Henry and Caroline's intercourse, and yet when there had happened one of those slight yet delicious differences which sweeten agreement, given to their mutual friend Charles; to the end that it should find its way, by that medium, into Caroline's bosom, where the kind Charles took care it should repose shortly after; and he watched his opportunity so well, that he procured for it that enviable resting-place in the course of the very day it was presented, and could it have known its happiness, "right proud would it have been of its lodging." It was a token of reconciliation; and as Caroline, then under the influence of those hopes, which an innocent passion, and the first of the heart, believed, as all lovers do, every thing possible, or more truly speaking to the sweet extravagance of the affections, impossibilities probable, she *looked a vow* as she tied that very riband round her neck, which had lately bound the paper, then fastened to the locket,

that

that neither time, nor chance, nor aught but the dissolving power of death, should rob her of that talismanic offering.

A cruel combination of circumstances, inexorable as death itself, ever since that fatal hour, which extinguished every tender hope, had made her take it, with a trembling hand, from its lovely mansion: Yet tenderness like hers survives even the extinction of hope, and manifests itself, perhaps most firmly, in the moment of despair. Her ultimate design was to return it by the medium she received it; in the meantime she looked upon it as a sacred property in trust, and deemed it worthy a place in the little sanctuary where her mother's picture and other reliques of the heart were deposited. Nay, she had carefully put them not only into the same drawer, but bound them together in the same paper, as fit companions for each other, separating them only since she brought them from the abbey, perhaps to avoid the discovery, which, putting them as she supposed in different pockets, produced.

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As the locket remained in the hand of Charles, Caroline cast a look first upon it, and then upon her brother, which was clearly understood by both; and perhaps by the whole company, to imply, "Alas! It is ours no longer. It is the property of Olivia, and must be resigned to the donor, with a secret injunction, to remember the friendship of Charles, but to forget the love of Caroline!" Some such sympathy must have struck the brother and sister at this crisis, for, as if suffering on the same sentiment, they ran into each other's embraces, consoling and commiserating one another.

Arthur saw the dilemma was of a singular kind, but had yet no clear idea of its cause: Charles, unwilling to deprive his sister of the locket, and Caroline reluctant to part with, yet resolved not to keep it longer in her possession, a train of objections having by this time mustered themselves; Arthur exclaimed, "My dear children, entrust this to my charge, till it suits with the time to reclaim or restore it. It shall be preserved as a relique of innocence, sensibility, and adversity;

adversity; the severe, but salutary school in which those gifts of heaven are best taught."

Thus have we seen the gentle Caroline, earnest in the preservation of a small unornamented miniature of her mother, and of a simple braid of Henry's hair, and to rescue them from the sacrilege of that plunder which might be expected from the new Lady Stuart; and, in short, jealous in her care of two precious trifles of nothing worth to the unfeeling heart, while she abandoned her pearls, jewels, and other attractive ornaments, which have charms for many of her sex, without bestowing a thought on what might become of them; and this would have been the case had every drawer been filled with gems of Golconda.

And now they all entered the chapel-house, where, by the soothing attentions of Dennison, father Arthur, and his good little "white-hearted blackamoor," as he used to call him, in the course of the evening they recovered a more considerable portion of their tranquillity, in the habitation of a poor monk, than could

could have been expected, in the most splendid apartments of the lofty mansion from whose vicious influence their virtue had escaped.

“ The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears,
“ Less pleasing far than virtue’s very tears.”

CHAPTER XXII.

THEY had remained at the chapel-house some days, and, by the mingled powers of sympathy, holy friendship, and unaffected communications with the Author of comfort, by the medium of his zealous and upright minister father Arthur, had found relief, when one evening, just as they had finished a twilight conversation, the purport of which was their yet-undetermined scheme of life, the bell of death, from the church of Fitzorton, assailed their ears—

“ And now it paus’d, and now with rising knell,
“ Flung to the hollow gale its sullen sound.”

They had rather looked than expressed apprehensions, when, alas! fresh trials of their fortitude arose.

True

True George, with a countenance like that which drew "old Priam's curtains in the dead of night," came charged with a letter to Charles, containing the following words—

"O Charles! my father is no more!—His soul has taken with him to heaven my oath—an oath ratified by my lips on the book of life, and given in the dying moment of the best of fathers—to become the husband of Olivia. Yes, dear, unhappy one! to marry her, so soon as the decent forms of sepulture will permit. My rebel heart delayed giving this fatal bond till he appeared to be in the last extremity. I could not endure to embitter a period so agonizing and awful. I gave up myself, you, and even Caroline, to the ease of an expiring parent. Alas! my friend, the Author of my being spoke to me, methought, on the border of eternity: he appeared to me, then, scarcely an inhabitant of this earth, and the voice with which he implored a son to bless a dying father, sounded as if it came from heaven. Trembling, I gave the fatal affirmation;—I dared, in that deep moment of lacerated nature, in which my soul seemed,

like Sir Armine's, prepared to leave this world, and all its hopes and fears—I dared to promise that I would give my prostitute hand to the beloved of my friend, and prove a traitor to my heart's former vows to ———. Oh! fill up the space with the name of one precious to thy friend as Olivia is to thee; and tell me how this double duty, or this double violation—this infidelity to one, and hypocrisy to another—an hypocrisy, too, which is to last for life,—ah! it may be a long, miserable, mournful life—are to be reconciled! To you only I can, I dare appeal. John is more awful than ———. Forget that thou art the son of Sir Guise Stuart, and speak to me as the friend of my youth, the partner of my few joys, the deposit of my many sorrows. Dying, my father separated your name from the name of him that gave it you; and requested the good Charles might be told he knew how to love and pity him. Olivia too, dear, unsuspecting girl, then kneeling at the side of his bed, intreated he would extend his blessing, his pity, and his love, to one no less deserving of them.—‘ O thou
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best of innocents,' cried Sir Armine, pressing her soliciting hands to his quivering lip, and casting at me a look which my bleeding heart interpreted, 'I do bequeath Caroline Stuart all thou requirest, and, next to thyself, the report of her virtues are nearest to me. Circumstances, my dear child, may so fall out—for the world I am leaving teems with hourly revolution—that one day thou mayest contrive to impart to her my benediction without pain to thyself or others.' Another interpretable look was here addressed to me; and the artless Olivia, who, without being able to construe it, fervently exclaimed, 'She hoped he would live to be himself the bearer of his blessing, and that, for her part, she did not believe even Henry's society could make her quite happy without that of the suffering Caroline. 'But,' added she, taking my hand, 'I am sure his own heart will incline to indulge me in this instance. Will you not, my dearest Henry, promise Sir Armine that you will imitate his father's almost divine goodness in making distinctions betwixt the wicked and virtuous of the same family?' One may better support,
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undue severity than an excess of unmerited kindness. Why do not the never-ending virtues of this exalted woman soften my soul-felt esteem to heart-felt fondness? O thou recently-departed spirit of my dear father! intercede with thy now associate angels; yea, with thy God, to infuse new love into my heart; or, intercede with that Fountain of Love, to release me from an oath which falsifies the passion that feeds upon my life! How can I support this pitiless storm, which rages on every side? How could that dear parent give it birth?—O! my friend, the tyranny of Olivia's virtues oppresses me almost to madness. They touch me with enthusiasm—they animate my whole frame,—they throb at every pulse, and every nerve of my soul attests their power. But the heart, my friend, the heart, in the midst of all this, is cold, insensible, uninfluenced, uninspired. Alas! it is another's!—O! didst thou know this, my Olivia, thou wouldst more than pardon—thou wouldst pity me, and, so well do I know thy tender nature, wouldst become a willing sacrifice.

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“ The continued excellence, Charles, of this young woman, to my father, to me, and to all of us, strengthens her claims, and adds to the infinity of my despair—for my heart is still undivided, uncontrolled, and still is Caroline unrivalled there. Behold me at once the victim of gratitude and love.

“ To detail the scenes I have past since last I wrote would be impossible. Have you any thing to propose by which I may escape an event, that, though chained by the most solemn but coercive bonds, I dare not think upon? Were I alone the sacrifice of my promise, it should be fulfilled; but when I turn my thoughts towards you, and—and——, I dare not trust myself with her name—there seems to be no sanctity in extorted vows, nor any crime which can measure to the anguish of my friend, and the eternal loss of her whom I hourly beg of the good God to surround with blessings. Why did I ever behold her?—Yet I bless my destroyer! How shall I commit my dear father's body to the grave? The bell at this moment tells the rich, the poor, and all who have heard his name, and felt the influence

of his virtues, that their companion, benefactor, patron, and common parent, is this very night to be closed in the cold vault.

“ A cruel accident was the immediate cause of his death ! But Sir Guise—O that he were not the father of my friend ! I will add no more !—Olivia, my agonized brothers, my afflicted James, and the subdued John, death-like in looks, as in silence, yet soft as love when those looks are directed to us, and Partington, forgetful of all his singularities, and weeping like a stricken babe, are gathered together around the venerable corpse, surveying his lifeless face.

“ Just as I was about to quit the room, I thought I beheld the smile which my, alas ! extorted obedience impressed on every feature, and made him die happy. How am I involved in the depths of misery ! and what a calamity is even my respite from these oath-bound nuptials ? For is it not derived from the death of the noblest of men, and dearest, best of fathers ? I write in this desolate hour to save myself from, perhaps, greater desolation. My brothers, John and James, preserve their senses ;

and though they feel like dutious sons, they resign themselves like Christians. They can bear the apparatus of the parting hour. Even the afflicted matron, the mourning widow, and the gentlest, or *almost* the gentlest of the sympathizing sex, support the ceremonies of the tomb with a decent dignity of grief, which in vain holds out an example to your friend. The sound of the hammer that closed the coffin almost unsettled my senses. Methinks I could at this moment lay myself at my dead father's side, and clasping his clay-cold hand, be buried alive, as well from filial affection, as to end this anarchy of my brain.

"O God! I am summoned to attend the hearse.—Olivia, with fainted voice and solemn steps, bids me remember my father is in heaven—she bids me be resigned, with her eyes swimming in tears.—My father is in heaven! O that I were any where, my friend, but in this hateful world! And yet I am told *self-release* from it is the hydra of human crimes.—I can no more.—My father is carrying out of the house—never, never to return! Adieu! I feel greatly disordered. Olivia

wonders at my delay, and at my employment; she little suspects I had, perhaps, been dead ere this, had I not thus relieved my bursting heart and burning brain !”

CHAPTER XXIII.

EVERY passion of his friend's soul was aroused by the perusal of this letter; which having read, he put into the trembling hand of his sister, exclaiming, “ Our ordeal is not yet over—Sir Armine Fitzorton is passing from the castle to the tomb.”

He then conferred apart with the bearer of the letter, and informed Arthur and Denison with the contents; while Caroline was left the victim of some indescribable emotions, excited by every sentence—for every sentence had its appropriate pang.—She often paused, and every pause was filled with the dismal bell that still rang out for the father of her soul-beloved Henry. The night was dark and the air was still, so that not a vibration of the lengthening toll was lost. There is in solemn and sudden sounds an awe-inspiring

spiring power, which suspends, for a time, the more clamorous fallies of grief.—Caroline having finished the letter, stood fixed as in profound thought. She then intreated to be left alone with her brother, while Dennison and Arthur disposed of True George. She walked with Charles by the light of the moon, and, insensibly taking the path which led from the chapel-house to the chapel, she stopped at the porch of the latter.

“Sole support of our fallen family!” said she, “and only hope of an unhappy sister! honour me in this heart-searching crisis of both our lives with your attention. We are called upon by every solemn appeal to shew ourselves not wholly degenerate. Deep are the atonements which we owe to that ill-treated family, now mourning their irreparable loss; and deep are the sacrifices which we must make. Alas! that piercing note of death, which sends its sound from the church of Fitzorton to the chapel of Stuart, informs us that all we can offer up will fall short of the ruin which our unhappy father has contributed, I fear, to produce.”

There was a pause of a minute, and Charles said, "Yes, there is much to be done. Ah, my sister! many are the victims now demanded.—You and I are of the number.—I know the nature of the duty, but fear"—"Fear nothing," interposed Caroline, "It is not heroism we must invoke, it is honour and justice, whose aid will do more for us than all that fabled deities have devised. My part is already decided, yours should be so too. We have long been, and are still, the grand impediments in the way of Henry Fitzorton's duty; yet hitherto we have been only unfortunate. All beyond the present hour would be guilt."

"Alas!" answered Charles, "must we resign Henry to Olivia for ever?"—"We must," rejoined Caroline, "do some act to prove to Henry the utter impossibility of an union elsewhere. This part is mine, and can be done only in one way—and that I will pursue——A life devoted to the God that gave it, ought never, my dear Charles, to be thought a sacrifice, not even in the blossom of youth and happiness; but when there
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is not a single joy left in the bereaved heart—when every aching sense bears throbbing witness of hopeless destitution; a secluded state, employed in holy offices, is not only a refuge from present despair, but will gradually oblivate the past disappointment, and light up in the soul sublime hopes that shall irradiate the future. To-morrow, I will consult the good father Arthur, and *my* part of reply to that letter shall be the communication of a resolve, which Henry Fitzorton knows I will not enter upon lightly, nor violate, when adopted, for the wealth of all created worlds, though every star which is now glowing above our heads was a globe of gems. With Caroline he would be wretched, with Olivia he cannot long be unhappy.

“ We are within a few paces of our dear mother’s tomb, and by the sacred ashes it contains, and O! an oath more holy, by her fainted spirit, which is above, I have here unfolded my intents, and expect you will not obstruct me in their performance.—Obstruct! no, my dearest Charles, you will assist your sister in the performance of her duty—

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duty—for whom of all her house has she now but thee, my brother?”

“Caroline!” replied Charles, “you *shall* be assisted, and though a monastic life is no fit refuge for a soldier, I will not be left behind you in becoming a self-devoted victim. As my tenderness for Olivia is not surpassed by that you have felt for Henry, neither shall my resignation be inferior.”

“*Have* felt!” exclaimed Caroline.—“Ah, you are yet to know the extent of your poor sister’s affection and despair. My youth has been a series of heart-breaking duties, and this last is—not the most easy to be born, but born it *shall* be! HAVE felt! O God, that seest and searchest the heart—thou knowest, at this moment, the bleeding sensibility of mine! I blush not, O thou that hast adorned the being I love with every virtue of the human heart, and every grace of the human form! I blush not before thee to avow the affection which thou hast thyself inspired; and I withdraw myself, under thy assistance, only to promote his good, prevent the evil which my abiding longer in his
fight

fight would bring upon him, and, in the humble hope that my unceasing prayers for his temporal and eternal happiness will be heard."

During this ejaculation, Charles paid the tribute of a tear to the virtuous distress of a sister, of whom his heart was proud, and of whom he determined to prove himself worthy. He interrupted not her pious rhapsody, but when she had ended it, gently pressed her hand, as they walked on, silently meditating the important task they had undertaken. The moon suddenly became clouded, yet they continued to walk arm wreathed in arm, as if to bring their designs into arrangement.

They were in that profound occupation of the mind, whereof the body has no share, whereof, indeed, even the faculties of the mind are excluded, save the one godlike faculty of virtuous fortitude, which may be supposed, in a case like the present, to emulate two young people, summoned on a great occasion to yield up the dearest part of themselves to another, and to confirm the mutual sacrifice,

fice, by some act which shall put it beyond their *own* power to retract their engagement, should even the seducing weakness of the heart at any time convene the relapsing passions to repent of what they had done. Under such absorbing employment of the soul, the motions of the body are wholly mechanical; we are carried we know not whither, for neither time, nor space, can then be measured. In this situation were Caroline and Charles; their feet had wandered from the track, and followed a direct contrary path; they found themselves, at length, in that which led to Fitzorton church. The moment that succeeded this discovery, presented to their view the solemn light of funeral torches, and ere they were aware of it, they perceived themselves at the gate of the church-yard, where the hearse had stopped, and its sacred deposit, Sir Armine's corpse, was just lifted on the shoulders of six of his servants, as he had ordered. "O gracious Heaven!" whispered Caroline; "whither, Charles, have our devious steps beguiled us? Alas! to the grave of Sir Armine."—"Even so," answered

swered Charles, retreating some few paces. They hastily walked into a remote path of the church-yard, while the procession kept its way to the burial-place of the Fitzortons. "Ah God!" exclaimed Caroline to Charles, "I discover Henry amongst the mourners:" "And there, close at his side," replied Charles, "is Olivia, supporting her weeping father with one hand, and receiving the support of Henry with the other, leaning for his help."—In one moment they both forgot they had been making resolutions.

As the bearers gained the porch of the church, and the multitude followed in decent sorrow, Charles and Caroline passed in the train undistinguished, and were as sincere mourners as any of the assembly. They felt themselves involved in the public calamity, to which they had still their suspicions that their own father had been accessory. Holding down their humiliated heads from the opposite pressures of grief, shame, and fear of discovery, they went with the lamenting multitude into the church. Forgetting all modes of faith, they joined with the fervour of

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devotion

devotion in that sublime form of prayer appointed in the protestant service for the burial of the dead.

The widowed matron, the venerable Clare, the sweet and mourning Olivia, and the three heart-united brothers, were arranged on one side of the body; Partington with the whole family of the poor Atwoods on the other. The household servants, the gentry of the neighbourhood, and all the tradesmen and tenants of the deceased, were gathered into distinct groupes within view of the coffin, and a mixed multitude filled not only every other part of the church, but the church-yard, so that every grave and tombstone was loaded with living spectators.

The vault of the Fitzortons lay in the eastern side of the church, bordering the steps of the altar. The coffin was slowly moving towards it, when Caroline, carried forcibly along by the press of the too eager multitude, lost the hitherto protecting arm of her brother, and was driven forward even within sight of the chief mourners. The solemn resignation of dust to dust was at
this

this instant pronouncing by the priest; the sexton proceeded to close the vault, and the assembly dispersed—Henry remained—"Stop, for pity's sake, stop one moment," exclaimed he, "disregard me not, good friends, but as you honoured the dead, and love the living, I conjure you leave me to myself."—Then finding himself obeyed, and the sexton suspending his office, he kneeled down, bowing his head to the vault, and clasping his hands forcibly together, remained mute. Olivia and Lady Fitzorton, overwhelmed by excess of grief, had been led away, by Partington and Mr. Clare, from the scene they could no longer support.

An action so characteristic of the enthusiasm of Henry had a too powerful effect on Caroline, whose tenderness and terror of heart proved, in this one instance, too powerful for the firmness of her soul. She sprang forward, exclaiming, "O God! O God!" as she pronounced which words she perceived Henry Fitzorton. He started at the well-known sound of her voice, and caught her in his arms. Her face being concealed by her posture,

posture, and most of the congregation being by this time dispersed and in disorder, little notice was taken by the sexton of a circumstance which might naturally happen at a funeral in two of the supposed same family. After Henry and Caroline, both deprived of utterance, had been in this situation the space of a minute, Charles, who had followed Olivia unseen, only for the melancholy satisfaction of a last look, came up, and finding Caroline in the attitude above described, kneeled down by the side of his sister and friend, and, in a suppressed voice, exclaimed, "O Heaven! Is it possible? whom do I see? Caroline and Henry!"

Charles took Caroline by the hand, and they walked out of the church by the chancel door, escaping thus the general observation. Henry followed, and did not speak till they had reached the grand avenue of afflicting memory, and which led equally to the abbey and castle. "I know not," said Caroline "how to account for this, otherwise than an event brought about without the consent, or, I might almost say,

say, the knowledge of either me or my brother. The wisdom of Providence worked by ways inscrutable. The story of our wanderings at this awful hour is unnecessary to mention, but deeming it of heavenly direction, I shall use it to acknowledge that your letter found its way into our souls, and that it is our joint desire and supplication that you observe your oath, and obey your father and your God."

Caroline trembled as she spoke; the effort to be firm, and to recover herself, did but the more plainly shew the excesses of her agitation.

Henry looked at Charles, who tenderly taking his hand, entered into a brief explanation of all that had passed in their discourse at the porch of the chapel, which preceded their meeting at the funeral. He ended with the determination of his sister, if the monk approved. "And for my part," added Charles, "I have come to resolves which will render it no less impossible for me to obstruct your union with Olivia, whom it is my solemn intreaty"—here Charles paused—"my solemn

lemn intreaty--alas ! my earnest supplication—that you should—O ! Henry, Henry—you know the rest.” Caroline, in a state of equal trouble, undertook to apologize for her brother’s want of words to express the act on which he was not the less resolved—and endeavouring to make up the deficiency, she fell into language so incoherent, obstructed, and inaudible, that relieving herself by a violent burst of tears, she declared it was a subject which defied the power of words and depended on deeds only—what those deeds were to be, had been in part explained, and this, alas ! was no time to enlarge.

“ Brother,” said Caroline, “ we must cross yonder part of the forest to the chapel.”

“ And not one token of eternal remembrance, at an eternal parting !” cried Henry, whom extremity of sensation had hitherto kept silent. “ Remembrance,” replied Caroline, “ O ! it shall, it must be indeed eternal, and for an eternity of blessings upon thee, if we now leave each other to our respective duties, the performance of which may, and, alas ! must, give us misery, but of which

which the omission would be shame, horror, and despair! I speak," added she, "with solemn reference to the living and the dead! Dearest and best of men! farewell—farewell—for ever!"

Henry, plunged in unutterable anguish, pressed her extended hand to his lips—and copious were the burning tears that bathed it.

Caroline turned away her head.

Charles spoke not, but clung round Henry's neck. Nature could carry the sensation no farther. They separated in dreadful silence; Henry taking the road to the castle, and the brother and sister returned to the chapel-house.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THEY had scarce reached the forest path, when they saw a light advancing towards them, and heard the sound of voices which they knew to proceed from Dennison and father Arthur. "My dear children," exclaimed

exclaimed the latter, running towards them, "you have alarmed us by your untimely absence; whither have you been wandering?" "Explanations must be deferred," said Charles; "let us make the best of our way to the chapel-house, for our minds and bodies equally demand repose."—"Lend Charles your arm, my good Dennison, and mine shall be the support of this dear young lady," cried Arthur, "and I command you both not to add to your fatigues by another word till we regain our peace-restoring abode; and then you shall silently partake of the refreshment we have prepared for you, and the word *farewell* shall be all that passes between us till the morning."

This truly excellent monk was, on the next day, made acquainted with all that had happened—from the conversation at the chapel-house to the rencontre at the church.

"I see, I see the Almighty hand in it all," said Arthur. "By what unsearchable means is the will of Heaven fulfilled! Your resolves are the result of virtue, strongly proved, and for every tear you shed in her cause, a smile from
that

that heaven shall await you. Your temporal sufferings have been indeed extreme, but eternity is before you, and I foresee, with a prophet's eye, that even in this world you shall have an earnest of your reward in that which is to come. Nay, you have it at this hour, my children. Look into your own pure hearts, and tell me, if you would exchange the conscious reflections which are there lodged, for all that is heaping up in the breasts of those who now inhabit the abbey? Is your loss infinite? So shall be your gain. He who trieth the very heart and reins hath tried you; but O! my dear, dear children, he hath examined and proved you, and made your way acceptable to him. What a consolation! what a victory! to be acquitted with honour by—nay to claim the approbation of your conscience and your God! Tell me, doth it not deprive adversity of her sting, enlarge every generous affection of the soul, and crush every selfish thought? It doth, it doth, my children, and it will give to returning prosperity, come when it may, more delightful charms! and besides
extracting

extracting thorns from the present, shall confer more sweets than the perfume of the flowers of Paradise on the future. Yes, my children, when you rest this night on your pillow, if your eyes should overflow at the retrospect of your sufferings and disappointments, reflect but for one moment that you have gained the applause of him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and you will slumber in peace and wake in triumph."

There was no professional pedantry, no unmeaning priestcraft in the character of father Arthur. He seldom held down his friends to long dissertations; but when he did assert the dignity of his office, his eloquence touched at once the understanding, the fancy, and the heart: while he spoke, the tumultuous passions seemed to die away, and the hearer thought it folly and delusion to disquiet himself about any pursuits less exalted than those which fill up the highest capacities of our nature. From his venerable lips the auditor became intimate with the lofty character of his being, and the sublime ends of his mind; the passions were purified, the desires elevated, and every faculty

culty of the soul assumed new energy and extent, as he painted the joys of conscience, and the bright recompence of the crown that "passeth not away."

He deemed this the fit opportunity to invigorate and encourage suffering virtue. He entered, feelingly, into the variety of sorrows which beset two amiable persons. His benevolent heart melted at the scenes of woe they had undergone, and at all they might yet have to endure. Their disappointments in whatever was most dear to the human heart, called forth all his compassion, all his powers, and giving vent to his bounteous feelings, he addressed to them the sentiments we have here recorded.

Every word had its due force, and they alternately embraced the good man when he had done, as if they were indeed his children.

Such reasonings are not lost on worthy minds; they had their effect on Charles and Caroline, who appeared on the following day endued with new vigour to conduct them with patience and honour through the strong duties they had to perform.

The

The admonition of father Arthur, respecting the affair of the convent, was consistent with the wisdom and goodness that pervaded his councils; and after a private conference with Caroline, whom he prevailed upon to put the entire management of the business, such as seeking out a fit place for her reception, and fit associations, where and with whom to begin her pious offices, he convened his little auditory, consisting of Caroline and Charles, Dennison and his Indian boy, and smiling upon them all, begged their attention to a few observations which pressed on his mind, in a survey he had taken of the late occurrences.

“My dear children and friends,” said he, “it is worthy your notice, that in the petty space of a few weeks have fallen out a variety of events, which must sink deep into the reflecting mind. In the degradation of Sir Guise Stuart, and in the circumstances that preceded and followed it, we have seen the pageantry of power, and the pride of fortune, unable to shield the hypocrite—pardon me
for

for the use of strong words to paint strong truths—the hypocrite, I say, from detection, misery, and shame; we have seen him deserted by his own servants. They fled from the contagion of vice to the protection of virtue; they left with an honest disdain the lordly mansion, and sought the cottage of piety and resignation. My dear children, doth not this point out the sublime authority and protection of virtue, even when she is depressed by misfortunes, and bowed down with or rather elevated by sorrows? At the least fear of Sir Armine's danger, did not the attesting country manifest in its woe the inestimable value of a good man's life? did not the heart-swollen grief of friends, neighbours, children, illustrate the importance and the majesty of virtue? and when it pleased him who liveth from eternity to eternity, to call the good man to the inheritance of the just, did it not seem, by the attendance, the tears, the groans, of the countless multitude, as if each spectator was following a father to the grave; did not you yourselves feel as if you were *his* children?"

“ O that

“ O that it had pleased Heaven to have made us such ! ” exclaimed Charles. The tears of Caroline began to flow ; the hoary cheek of Dennison was not dry, and the Indian child of nature crowded close to Arthur, touched his robe with pious awe, and doubted whether man or angel had spoken. “ But,” resumed Arthur, “ when it was but rumoured that Sir Guise was on the bed of death, did it not rather seem to be the approach of some happy and unexpected revolution in favour of mankind, at but the distant prospect of being emancipated from some despotic tyrant, whose life was obnoxious, and whose dissolution was implored ? and had *his* death followed, is there a sigh which would have been heaved, save those of mercy and terror for his departing soul, or a tear shed by one of all the congratulating thousands on his hearse ? ” “ O yes, a thousand sighs---a thousand tears,” exclaimed Caroline, sighing and weeping in proof.—“ My dearest child,” rejoined Arthur, taking her hand, “ pardon my having forcibly touched a wounding subject ; the All-good is of long patience, and of eternal kindness ! ”

kindness ! thy father may be yet preserved as an example of penitence, as constant as his crimes have hitherto been lasting."

Caroline dropt on her knee, elevating her hands, and seemed to offer up a prayer which these chearing words had excited in her soul. Dennison and Charles lifted their eyes to heaven, and the Indian boy raised up Caroline, saying, " Young lady was so pretty and so good, that good God would make her father good yet for *her* sake."

" We have seen too in yourselves, my children," concluded Arthur, " the upright finding favour and honour, followed by the prayers of the living, nay the persecutors themselves, in despite of the inveteracy of habit, or natural hardness of heart, feel the awful powers of persisting innocence ; and, perhaps, the deepest resentment of the bad against the good arises from a consciousness that even the happiest triumphs of vice are less to be envied than the miseries of suffering virtue, which we are told, and blessed be the great Rewarder, we *know*, " Is but more relished as the more distressed." Witness for

me, O recompensing Power, how sincerely I weep at the griefs and disasters of this afflicted brother and sister! How my heart glows at the fidelity of this good old man, how it beats with a paternal tenderness towards this poor artless youth, whose untutored mind is filled with natural goodness! Witness all this! and witness at the same time, that I experience more soul-felt satisfaction in suffering with them, in affording them my humble protection and encouragement, in shewing to this enlightened pair the benevolence of Heaven *made manifest even in their adversity*, in pointing to the sure rewards that await this venerable man, and in opening upon the dawning reason of this boy those sublime truths which may convince him not only that his God is "to be seen in clouds and heard in winds," but that his creative, protective, and sustaining power, embraces all climes and encircles all nature; and lastly, that whatever may be the distinctions of partial man, the Maker of us all acts under influence of no such prejudices---but attending only to the complection of the heart, hath allotted a place of

of happiness and glory to all that wear the forms of men, whether born under the blaze of the sun or placed beyond the reach of his beams !”

While father Arthur made this apostrophe, his eyes sparkled, his cheeks glowed, and the sincerity of his heart was visible in his features.

“ Maffer,” said Floresco, “ me could hear you talk all times, and me am better boy, and better good christian black every time, and me shall go to good place like white man, and live all times with good peoples and good Maffer, and be in God’s heaven, though Negro boy !”

CHAPTER XXV.

THE parties then separated for the night, and the next morning shewed the *effects* of what had past in the subsequent letters, one of which was the spontaneous effusion of the writer’s unassisted heart, and the other the result of an early conversation betwixt Charles and Caroline.

Without clogging either of them by any commentary, the reader shall be left at large to form his own reflections.

“ To Miss Caroline Stuart.

“ Honoured my Lady,

“ After begging a thousand pardons for this boldness, seeing I am but an humble servant, but, I trust in God, of good designs, I must let your Ladyship know of my state, which is the windfall of my brother Ned's farm and the like, come to me by death of Ned this past week, which I have to notice to your honour's valuation, for being on lease for 21 years, of which 11 are yet to come, of goods and chattels, as per advice, 1400l. and ready money upwards of 500 l. besides the savings up of 1100 l. in your honoured honour's family, by the mother's side, with whom I was bred and born, and with whom, God willing, I will die, and, if I may be so free, buried. Now I can hardly go on with penning my letter for what I hear about your honour's going to shut yourself up for life, and young 'squire master's taking himself over
sea.

sea. As to the first, consider, my dear good young lady---pardon my boldness---if any thing should happen you don't foresee---for, Lord save us! we are poor short-sighted creatures---and I have my thoughts about some matters that may not be spoken to; what a sad thing it would turn out, to be closed as it were between walls and never to come out---and your dear honour should consider a day is to come, when the poor (and rich too) of this parish will call for you---and, alas! you cannot hear them, nor do them good---the thought whereof, if it should come across in your lonesome cell, would be a heart-breaking to you---And what if other matters should come round---I must not speak of the castle; therefore, shall only say love is not to be fastened out by bolts nor bars, and I have my misgivings; I will say no more, Miss, but I have my misgivings; and I told all this and more to his reverence. As to the other affair---the 'squire's going to transport himself, his honour should think he is heir, and God give him life to take possession of this estate, and Sir Guise cannot hope to live for ever---and, begging pardon for my

boldness, it is not fit he should; I hope the good 'squire will think what will betide every thing at the old abbey, if the new fangled strange woman—I can't for the heart of me call her my lady—is left to have every thing her own way; and if the lawful heir is away, and your honour shut up, who is to prevent these doings? If an humble servant, therefore, may be so bold to advise, it is this, that your honour will be so kind as to make use of the above 1100 l. seeing it belongs to the family, by your ladyship's side, and as the chapel-house is, as I may say, in a straight between two, the abbey and the castle, both being too near neighbours, seeing they are not friends, and must be, as circumstances now are, eyesores to your honour and the 'squire, my brother Ned's farm has a topping good house upon it—and as I know something of the business, I could carry on the farming, and your honours might live upon the same, and with his reverence and his good little black, we might be happy, in an humble way, considering what your honours have been used to, till God sees good time to restore you to
your

your own; and as his reverence says we carry our own heaven or hell about us; so our heaven upon earth may as well be at Ned's farm, as any where else, till we all get into your heavens above. Such is your humble servant's good counsel; but if it so be it be not taken, and your honours prefer a London town life, or the like of this public way, Ned's farm might be turned into hard money, for as to carrying it on against your honour's good will, or your honours to live in one place, and Dennison in another, it is not to be reckoned upon, seeing it cannot be; for as it is said in the holy bible, used in churches, "wheresoever you lodge will I lodge," and so on. The lease, and the stock, and the households, would make up a roundish-like sum, and your honour's 1100 l. might go thereto, and together we might live bobbishly. Now do not, my good lady miss, think my humble designs, hereby, to hurt you, the squire, or his reverence, by making a mighty matter of the aforesaid, in the way of vain-glory, which is a sin forbidden, and if it were not, I should be ashamed of, for if a man's heart goes to

the thing that should not be, what are laws and gospels, in churches and chapels, your honour? Old Dennison is no boaster, an' please your ladyship; when your honours can render back unto Cæsar, that is Dennison, even to the uttermost farthing, that which is Cæsar's, to-wit Dennison's, so be it; I don't gainsay it, forasmuch as I know by myself, the joy of giving is greater than taking, and I would desire your honours to have joy both ways; I only mean, that if in my time the wherewithal should not come, it would not signify, as I have neither chick nor child, and my last testament would be as well put in force by your dear worthy honours when I am in my grave; but I pray it may be in the parish where your honours mean to lie, which I suppose will be here in Stuart chapel. But this matter will be found more fully in what I shall leave behind, I mean in the testament; therein too is, all and severally, specified my devisings, hoping your honours will be the sole executors of your poor humble servant, to command,

“ NESTOR DENNISON.

“ P. S.

“ P. S. Finding I did not well know how to speak the above to your honours, I have put it down on paper, though I’m in the same house.”

To write this epistle was Dennison’s employment, after he had withdrawn for the night, and it took him up some hours; after which he laid himself on the bed, without undressing, and enjoyed the most sweet repose till the usual hour of rising, when going into the chamber of the little Indian, who he found had been at his pen and ink also, borrowing from sleep what he gave to his studies; Dennison put the letter into his hand, desiring it might be laid on the breakfast table, nearest the lady Caroline’s seat, and covered over with these sweet flowers, which I have fresh gathered—“ But stay,” says Dennison, “ my good boy, we must brush off this morning dew, or it will wet the paper, and I would not for all the flowers i’ the field, have that happen.” Here he shook them gently, and dried them one by one, then gave them to Floresco, who artlessly

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said :

said: "Me gues who that letter comes from—'tis from somebody that loves missey." "You are right, boy," replied Dennison, "it is from one that loves her dearly." "Aye, I tought so; but why you put pinks, rofes, and such'um like over dat? Missey will tink dere is no sweet but de sweet words of him him loves. Ah! me knows dat, though Negro boy. Looke you, dis ickle letter come from mine own Zoraida in mine own country; it is dear as mine own heart, and it make me cry, and it make me laugh; but see 'tis almost gone into bits and scraps, with shutting and opening; for I have a peep at it every times I am by myself—but masser is almost makey me write de nice words, and I learn de faster that I may fend to my own heart's dear Zoraida for another letter, as dis is almost wear out; see, I have been writin A, B, C, D, and E, and tink me shall pick my own Zoraida's name out by and bye; but I must make him hold together till dat you know. I wish him was as fresh as dis to missey."

Previous

Previous to this observation, the poor boy took out of his pocket-book a little leathern case, from which he produced a parcel wrapt in several papers, and lastly a piece of shawl made its appearance, in which was guarded Zoraida's epistle, that was sent to him after he had been sold, but now terribly torn in the foldings, and, indeed, almost in tatters. After shewing it Dennison with a disconsolate look, he kissed it somewhat too devoutly ; for two of the pieces, incapable of bearing the ardour of the salutation, fell to the ground. His distress is not easily described, at the discovery of this disaster : it was expressed by a sort of shriek, at the end of which he exclaimed, stooping down, " Oh ! mine heart—mine poor heart—is drop in bits, and I no write yet to get him fresh."

He then gathered up the pieces, in which Dennison assisted, promising to write a letter to Zoraida for him, and in the mean time to contrive some means of patching up the old one.

This compromised the matter ; and the grateful boy, putting up the precious reliques,

with the same care he had taken them out, went to dispose of the steward's packet, according to the orders he had received.

The company soon appeared at their morning repast; and the letter was discovered under the flowers, by the lovely eyes for whose perusal it was intended. They dropt many a lucid testimony, to denote that the contents were interesting to the affections, while they paused on the sentiments; and "Good, dear, excellent old man!" exclaimed she, at the conclusion, "were our misfortunes to answer no greater end than calling forth such virtues as thine, we should not suffer in vain!" The letter was then given to Charles, who, with equal emotions, read it aloud. "Not that any part of the honest creature's offer can possibly be accepted," said Charles; "but it is honorary to the human soul to be in friendship with such a man!" "True," said Arthur; "but to consider ourselves worthy to be followed by such a man, from the house of feasting into that of mourning, is a triumph which is reserved only for the good."

Floresco,

Floresco, who had listened to every syllable with the utmost attention, struggled with his sensations some time, and at last burst into tears; amidst the flow of which he exclaimed, "O! make me, masser, like Mr. Dennison; but me am poor Negro boy, and no money; but me give ickle to poor beggarman, and would diggey and workey all day, all night, all life, for feel as him feels."

But Dennison himself witnessed not these tender effects of his letter. On the contrary, he purposely absented himself, and was missing the whole morning. Oh, Reader, what is in the human heart, when it has either done any thing remarkably meritorious or base, to avoid the eyes, while the action is recent, of the benefitted or wronged? Is it the honest internal shame which conscience dictates, on one hand, and the ingenuous modesty, and delicate fear of wounding the feelings of the object whom we have served, on the other? Both produce blushes, but as different in their effect, as in their cause. When Dennison at last made his reluctant appearance, he could not have cast down his eyes, nor discovered a
more

more glowing cheek, or tumultuous voice, had he been detected in robbing the parties of the sum he had offered to lend them. But his generous distress was soon lost in the embraces of his friends.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE second letter, of which we promised our readers a faithful copy, was as follows, from

Charles Stuart to Henry Fitzorton, Esq.

“ My still and for ever beloved Friend,

“ It is now that I am to confirm, in the name of myself and sister, her resolves, and my own, to put it out of the power of either of us to do you or your much-injured family any further wrong. Humiliated to the very dust, and overwhelmed with confusion, I turn back my view on the evils which have been brought upon your house by the animosity of mine : nor do I think I could bear the anguish
of

of these reflexions, were I not instantly, on my part, to make all the atonement in *my* power; at the same time my almost angel sister equals the sacrifice on *hers*.

“ Know then, my friend, that we, like you, have now our solemn vows registered in heaven. We concur in giving up our eternal hopes to the vows made to your dying father, and to the happiness of Olivia Clare. We have long struggled with impossibilities. Such were the pretensions of us all. We yield. And if we did not, such has been the horror of past occurrences, that were even our former affections to take their bent, the greatest impossibility would be, to reconcile, even with possession of our darling objects, those deep wounds in the memory, which must for ever open wide, and stream with the blood of Sir Armine, shed by Sir Guise ! Neither Olivia nor Henry, with all their magic, could demolish this everlasting barrier to our repose. The father rising against the father, and the broken oath of a friend, and the breaking heart of an adorable woman—perhaps her hate superadded—Oh ! insupportable addition !

tion!—and all this as a judgment on our violations—would mix in every thought, and empoison felicity, even in the arms of love. Think, O think, my friend, what must be the state of my feelings, or of Caroline's; piercingly tender, alas! as they ever were, when conscience tells us, we ought to felicitate ourselves on a mutual escape from the only injuries which Sir Guise has left in the power of his children to do the children of Sir Armine: yet felicitate ourselves we cannot; for our loss is infinite and eternal; but that we may become the victims of a stern and absolute law of honour and of conscience, we have, in the most awful manner, and in a situation the most solemn, even kneeling at the tomb of our fainted mother, mutually sworn. You will not even receive this letter, till no earthly power could change our resolves. My sister joins me in wishing you all the good that can be thought, and far more than can be expressed. She unites too in the firm persuasion and belief, that the graces and virtues of —O stubborn heart! why dost thou throb with a violence that makes the unsteady hand

almost unable to mark the name upon paper? —the virtues of *Olivia*—as much the object of your tenderness, as she has ever been of your admiration and esteem! How full of despair, alas! is our condition, when sacrificing ourselves, we implore of Heaven, that this may be the issue of your—your—your—by my soul, Fitzorton, it seems like the stroke of death, or of life prolonged by torture, to mention your—MARRIAGE with Olivia! and yet Heaven, that knows the weakness of my heart, knows also, that I would not accept the hand of that very Olivia, taxed, as it would be, with ten thousand scorpion reflections, for the eastern world; nor would I have her become the wife of any man breathing, but of Henry Fitzorton. Notwithstanding which, I dare not confess, even to my gentle sister, these marks of distracting, hopeless, yet tyrannizing affection, which I have blended with the simple expression of our resolves and good wishes, that I undertook to communicate. The constancy of her own virtue might expect better things of mine; but her confidence is illimitable; and her trusting heart will believe,

lieve, that I have performed my pangful task as I ought. Lest I disgrace it yet more, let me hasten to beg you will present the inclosure according to its address, and that you accept the prayers of

“ CAROLINE and CHARLES STUART.

“ *P. S.* We have left the abbey, and taken refuge in the chapel-house, but only till we could mature our several plans of life, which, now being arranged, we shall shortly quit this place: nor can we ascertain our next address; and if we could, it would be superfluous, for any reply to these final dispatches would be in the highest degree improper. In one instance, my Henry has deceived his Charles: the latter has discovered—by what means it matters not—that the former was the medium of his brother John’s benevolence, in regard to the lieutenancy. In short, it turns out to be a fraternal confederacy, between the brothers, to serve an unhappy friend, the son of their bitterest enemy !”

The Inclosure.

“ To Sir John Fitzorton.

“ Sir,

“ As I can offer no atonement for injuries, I can no longer bear the calamitous burthen of benefits from the man so injured. This will at once account to you for the resignation of my lieutenancy, of which, by accident, I have found you to have been the donor; and if you judge of the firmness of my mind by the vigour of your own, or will so far exert your candour as to admit any parallel in our principles, you will accept of my heartfelt gratitude for the past, and not turn that generous emotion into its reverse, by any vain attempt to reconcile what is in its own nature irreconcilable. Since I received your honoured admonition, a train of tremendous incidents have, as you know, fallen out, to render unnecessary all farther warnings. You will hereafter find, that I shall even do more than you required, in regard to one distracting subject: but this, alas! is no time to burthen your full heart with

with either my past misfortunes or future resolves. My commission, sir, may much more honourably be bestowed. For myself, I am still attached to the military life, and shall remain a soldier; but must take the liberty to serve my king and country without violating my own feelings.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Your most grateful and obedient servant,

“ CHARLES STUART.”

The above packet was dispatched by the trusty Dennison, who was made acquainted with so much of its contents as to convince him of the necessity of its being delivered to Henry Fitzorton's own hand, and in private, without waiting any replies.

Olivia was walking with Henry in a back avenue of the castle as Dennison rode up to the house, and by a concealment of the trees, which were there thicker than ordinary, to serve as a screen from the north-east wind, he did not perceive either Henry or the young lady till they were too close for any retreat. And this would have been rendered
yet

yet more difficult, as little Fitz—who, as usual, was the attendant on Henry and Olivia—happening to wander, on the hunt, into the path that Dennison had taken—announced, by cries of gladness, that one of the abbey family was at hand. A universal tremor seized Henry. Dennison had always been the faithful medium of his affections, and silently shared in his regrets and disappointments. Dennison was himself greatly moved at this sudden encounter, and the mutual endeavour of both to conceal it from Olivia, more effectually betrayed them. Far, however, far as tender sympathy is from jealous suspicion, was that spirit of candour from conjecturing that the real cause was seated in the despairing Henry's heart, or that the good old man was in its fullest confidence. Attributing the whole to some untold calamity which had happened in a family, in whose misfortunes they were all, in a manner, involved, and the sufferings of her ever-remembered Caroline first exciting her sympathy, "Alas!" exclaimed she, "I fear some fresh distress has fallen out at the abbey. Tell me, sir, is Miss Stuart,

Stuart, or the good Charles, in any new distress?—What less can be the cause of these emotions?”—Dennison answered only by a heavy sigh and shake of the head. On recovering himself, he said he was charged with a commission from his young master to 'squire Henry, which must be deferred till he regained his strength and spirits. “I am a poor, infirm creature, Miss, and a little matter oversets me.”

Olivia, who was, in every sense of the word, one of the least suspecting of human beings, desired Henry to assist the old steward into the house, where they had no sooner arrived, than, receiving a summons from her father, she left Henry and Dennison together.

“Alas!” said Dennison, “I fear me much, the weakness I have been guilty of has well nigh discovered what my master and mistress enjoined me to conceal. But your honour and madam took me unwares—I was not in the best spirits before.—I have lost my rest of some nights.—Sleep is an old man’s friend.—I did not think to see your honour so much changed—and I forgot you were all in black; and

and poor little Fitz's love put me in mind of former times; and I had just left one set of sorrowfuls to meet another—so that it was too much for an old creature; and I doubt the young lady's suspicion—”

“ Ah! she hath not an atom in her disposition!” cried Henry; “ but for pity's sake, thou to whom I owe eternal gratitude—gratitude which even despair cannot extinguish, tell me the message you have brought from the abbey?”

“ Not from the abbey, but the chapel-house,” sighed forth Dennison. He then took out Charles's packet, which, having put into one of Henry's hands, he pressed the other to his aged bosom, kissed it, then wished him all God's choicest blessings, saying, “ If that lovely young lady was to be his bride, she must be a happy one, even though he thereby lost Miss Caroline. I cannot, must not stay, my dear, honoured 'squire; but upon earth and in heaven I shall remember, love, and bless you!”

The tears of an old white-headed man, whose honesty we have long known, and
whose

whose affection we have often proved, shed over us at probably an eternal parting, are, at *all* times, affecting; but in Henry's case—combined, as it was, with the most touching circumstances of gratitude, doubt, terror, and tenderness—it is no wonder that he suffered Dennison to leave the castle without the utterance of another word.

It was, indeed, a considerable time before he had sufficient strength to open the eventful packet, of which his inmost soul felt at once the virtue, the energy, and the irremediable necessity.—“Excellent Charles! divine Caroline!” said he. “Yes, your Henry shall be added to swell the sacrifice of self-devoted victims; and our oaths shall be respected!”

By degrees his mind softened to a sort of pious acquiescence, and seeing himself hemmed round by innumerable duties at the castle, and insurmountable difficulties at the abbey, a new oath ascended silently from his lips to that Heaven which had received his former, and, kneeling down, he cried out in a loud voice, thrice repeating it, “Here then,

then, again I swear to devote my hand to Olivia! Witness the oath, O God!"

Olivia, re-entering, distinctly overheard Henry pronounce this solemn asseveration. He was yet on his knees. Olivia raised him into her innocent arms.—“Join, join my fervent and humble prayer,” said she, “to the attesting God, that I may deserve the blessing those vows impart!” Henry reiterated them in her embrace.

Whoever wants any explanation of this little incident, would not comprehend its force were it illustrated by all the books of the Sorbonne. To every tender heart it will be intelligible, and to such only it is addressed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHILE they were thus situated, John Fitzorton came into the apartment to witness this. Olivia, to ease the overflowing of her heart, which had now felt the first returns of joy since the death of Sir Armine, could not

forbear describing to John the circumstance which had given birth to her happiness.

Henry delivered to his brother the letter which had been addressed to his care; and John, after hastily reading it, went out of the room.

Henry and Olivia, being again left together, fell into a train of reflections, which, insensibly, brought round the conversation to the present posture of affairs at the abbey.

“Alas!” cried Olivia, “I dread, yet wish to hear what are those sad events which have the power to affect not only the sympathising heart of my beloved Henry, but to move the firm temper of John. It was, I see, not without difficulty he restrained his tears. But did you notice the affecting turn of his powerful eyes as he directed them to us? The more I see of him, the stronger is my veneration. How gratifying to the inmost soul to possess his approbation; but, good Heaven! how insupportable would be his anger!”

Although this was an hour in which Olivia gained extremely on Henry, he had presence of mind enough to communicate only such parts

parts of the chapel-house packet as might satisfy the solicitude which he saw it had raised : to have told her all he knew, would only have destroyed her happiness, and augmented his own infelicity ; and he had now firmly resolved to resign himself to the inevitable destiny of his life. He informed her, therefore, of the Baronet's indiscreet marriage ; of the open rupture which had happened in consequence of making such a wife the mistress of his family ; of the impossibility there was, that Caroline, or her brother, should remain longer at the abbey ; of their departure thence ; of their present residence with the venerable father Arthur, and their domestic, the good Dennison ; of their forlorn state of mind and fortunes ; and of their future destination, bound by oaths, which, " from my acquaintance with both," said Henry, with a trembling voice, " I know to be irrevocable as fate itself."

Olivia not only gave him full credit for the tender feelings of friendship, but countenanced them by generous testimonies of her own, and asked, with the most fascinating simpli-

city and ardour, "whether it were not possible essentially to serve these excellent persons without wounding their delicacy? My beloved Henry will not suppose that I involve their virtues in the faults of their father; or that I do not as fervently wish, and intend to sue for, the revived friendship and society of Caroline. And if I have been withheld from the like avowals, it has been in conformity to the melancholy, which must, alas! long hang over our house, and which suspends every promise of the heart. But, indeed, Henry, I have a faithful memory, and think it is a solemn duty, incumbent on us both, to consult each other, till we strike upon some expedient by which your friend Charles and my Caroline should be reconciled to the felicity we should feel in rendering them happy."

"Generous creature!" cried Henry, "it is impossible."

John re-entered, and read the letter he had received from Charles; "because," he said, "it was to the honour of the human race that such an action should be known."

"Where," said Olivia, "where must be the heart of Sir Guise Stuart, that it catches not some sparks of virtue from such a son!"

"And how irrefragable must be that son's virtue," added John, "which receives no foul tints from the contagious example of such a father!"

Henry sighed in the heaviness of his soul.

"Something might, surely, be contrived notwithstanding," whispered Olivia.

Henry, fully sensible of her excellence, begged the subject might drop for the present.

Olivia, however, took an early opportunity of renewing it, little imagining that she was labouring the very point which kept alive the only subject it was her interest to annihilate, instead of suffering it to die silently away. Henry, after strong repetitions of his assurances, that nothing *could* be devised, again put an end to the subject.

It occurred to Olivia, that Henry might be deterred from serving his friend, on consideration, that, as the power of conferring pecuniary obligations to any very consider-

able amount, would originate from her, she thought that she could not possibly give him a more graceful instance of her affection, and at the same time effectually indulge her own bounteous disposition, than by entering privately, and without assistance, into such arrangements as might answer the ends proposed. She could not easily settle on a plan, but she felt in every fibre of her heart, that she would adopt any one that might be likely to promote an object, which, by tender prepossession for, and long meditation upon, was become, in addition to the assured affection of Henry, the one thing necessary to her happiness. Day and night did she revolve the point in her fancy; but apprehensive that either Charles or Caroline would put their scheme into execution before her own should be matured, or even engendered, she formed the resolution of paying a visit to Caroline; convinced, that when they got once together, something might be done which should facilitate the happiness of all.

A pur-

A pursuit of this kind, in which all the generous affections are convened to assist, is among the highest delights of a young and animated mind; the agitation which attends, and the secrecy with which it is conducted, are parts of its happiness. Olivia—whose whole life was too innocent for the disguises or concealments of an action or a thought—intended, that Henry, her father, and everybody concerned, should be, at a fit season, in confidence of her designs, but she wished to give them something like “form and pressure,” before they were revealed; and this secret interview with Caroline was designed as the general outline. She knew, that two women, of warm imaginations, could do more towards the advancement of a favourite project, by one hour’s conversation, than by an age of solitary thinking; and she was *pre-determined* to believe, that her mind was so exactly in sympathy with that of Charles’s sister, that their wits would be in immediate unison, and that something would be struck out—from this collision of discourse—which would

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make

make her return to her soul-beloved Henry, doubly happy, from the discovered power of enlarging the sphere of his enjoyment; the grand point in which were concentrated all the hopes and endeavours of her life.

While she was yet in search of an ostensible motive for her visit—at least such a one as could be reasonably assigned—and while she began to feel somewhat embarrassed at the difficulty, Caroline's spaniel—which had been for some time asleep at her feet—started in slumber as if dreaming of the chase, then barked as if, after long puzzling at the scent, he had hit it off, and, after running it at full cry, awoke. Courting his new mistress's caresses, he leaped into her lap; and at the self-same instant leaped into Olivia's mind, which had, also, been on the hunt, an idea that he would be a fit instrument of her operations on the present occasion. "The most proper and natural apology in the world, dear, little creature," exclaimed she, smoothing his velvet ears, and patting his downy sides: "The keeping thee, agreeable as thou art, so long from thy poor mistress, has lain on my conscience,

science, and now that she is under affliction, thy society, and various endearing ways, may, haply, beguile her of her grief, and steal her sometimes from herself. Thou wilt soon discover, dear, sensible, sagacious little being, that she wants every relief which an old friend can afford, and wilt, therefore, double thy fondness. Nor shall she have cause to think thou hast been unfaithful, by voluntary desertion. Albeit, thy first ramblings discovered the little truant of an hour, they were intended only that thy neighbouring friends should share thy company, and thou wouldest have returned to her who owned thee—I know thou wouldest—had not thy sympathy for our sorrows, and my seductions, kept thee from thy own house. All this shall thy lovely owner be told, and if there be ought of blame, it shall light on Olivia; or, to clear thy fame from ingratitude, as rare in thy race as common in ours, even my Henry, shall be made a partner in the trespass we have committed; and thy lady shall understand the arts *he*, too, used to make thee sensible his attentions were never paid in vain. And yet, trust

me, kind-hearted creature, nothing but a sense of thy duty and mine own honesty should induce me to part with thee—but it will not be for ever; since I tell my affections, thy best friends shall be mine, and thou, who art now to be an assistant in the plan, wilt be entitled to part of its felicity.”

Ah, reader! what arguments the inventive heart can find when it wants their aid! All this was very true, and it would have been no less so had it been thought of many days before: but a feeble spaniel was now a tower of strength to a favourite plan of operations.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NOTHING now remained to perfect Olivia's enterprize, but a fit opportunity of sallying forth, and this soon presented itself. John had desired of Henry a morning's private conference; Lady Fitzorton was employed in her own apartment; Mr. Clare was going his usual ride. Thus favoured by circumstances, she gave out, that as the day invited, she should live in the air, and wander

about like one of its feathered inhabitants. "But," said she to her father as he was mounting his horse, "I shall only make a circular flight of it, and at the sound of the dressing bell return to my nest." She soon summoned her four-footed associate, who seemed to take the hint, and with a bounding step and beating heart she set forward toward the chapel-house. It was an enterprize that more than emulated the spirit of older times; it put the flower of knighthood to the blush. It had the purest motive, and proposed the noblest end. There were dangers to be past, and difficulties to be subdued; but these all yielded to youthful hope and imagination, those generous Quixotes in the chivalric adventures of the human heart.

There is, assuredly, an exultation seldom felt, and never to be described, attendant upon the performance of every hard and difficult duty. Charles and Caroline Stuart were in the possession of this, after they had performed the sacrifices with an account of which Dennison had been charged. And while that honest creature was on his com-

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mission,

mission, the brother and sister wept and smiled in the fullness of their hearts, sensible of their forlorn condition, yet proud to suffer with the dignity of virtue, what virtue required. In this tearful triumph they related what they had done to father Arthur, whose reflection on their conduct produced the subsequent remark. "My children," said he, "the majesty, or the meanness, yet more than the strength or weakness of the soul, is only to be ascertained by an occasion like this. The *mean* will temporize; the *majestic* will stoop to no accommodation short of the point which honour prescribes. The mean will shift about for an evasion; methinks I see him trembling at the approach of a duty which menaces the deprivation of what he has long cherished. His conscience and his passions are at war within him. The insurrection of the little invisible world is hot and obstinate, but his spirit is abject. Virtue, with a frown, demands her sacrifice. He arms against her all his forces. She is immortal, and he arms in vain. 'Such a point must absolutely be yielded,' saith she somewhat

somewhat austerely, he still resists, and calls in his auxiliaries,—sophistry, prevarication, and delay. They prevail not, for his own conscience, another divinity, goes over to the side of virtue, even when every one of his passions keep the field. Behold, how he waits, to the last moment, in a miserable balance betwixt the disgrace of the most vile and the glory of the most virtuous action! Every hope and fear upon the scout, to hunt for possibilities of an escape, till pushed by circumstances, he at last gives way only to an arbitrary necessity; to that he yields without any impulse from the moral principle, and repines for the rest of his life. The majestic, on the other hand, not less sensible of what is dear to keep, and difficult to part from, obeys, for a while, the dictate of human nature. He sees the advancing power, that is to dismantle his breast of a cherished joy; he receives him with a sacred awe that wants a name, disdaining to hold in equipoise the choice of good and evil; or, when a great and positive duty, arrayed,

it

it may be, in terrors, and pronouncing what is fitting to be done—in the still small voice of conscience, whose whispers are, to such minds, more loud and alarming than the thunder—the majestic, I say, my dear children, your recent experience tells you, takes the treasure which had been long enthroned on the heart of hearts, out of the bosom, where it was lodged and treated as a guest from Heaven,—innocent affection is such—and, like the patriarch offering up his only son at the command of God, prepares to sacrifice; the majestic weeps and trembles at the altar as he binds the beloved victim—the blood of the heart seems to blend with his tears, but they are the tears neither of weakness, nor of rebellion: They are not the bitter waters of repining on having made that sacrifice, but a sacred stream flowing from a tender heart, which mingles the feelings of a man with the duties of a christian. My children, he who made us ‘tremblingly alive,’ sanctions the feeling which the agonizing yet blissful sensibility he gave, creates.

creates. Even I, who have had my heart educated in the pale cloister, there labouring early to govern the passions of nature, hesitate not to declare, such sorrow is, *indeed*, heavenly !”

The whole of the time that Arthur was uttering this speech, the brother and sister illustrated it by example ; and, perhaps, without hearing one half of it, continued to smile and weep as if their sensations were beyond the reach of declamation or eloquence. The proudest forms of words are, indeed, wretched mediums to paint any of the grander movements of the soul, and particularly the struggles of honour and affection. These are unspeakable : and when Arthur had paused, it was, perhaps, some relief to the afflicted friends whom he addressed, that he was prevented from going on by the unexpected sight of the little animal lately mentioned. He had often roved away, and often returned for caresses, yet gained the chapel-house before Olivia ; nay he had made his best apologies there for absence, and by every testimony

mony of tenderness, had conciliated the favour of Caroline; while Olivia, though the generous purpose of her visit hastened her steps, was scarce midway.

Excuse the human heart, good reader; if thou hast any knowledge of it, thou wilt: Excuse, too, the truly virtuous and resolved Charles and his sister, if the slight surprize of suddenly observing a poor truant dog return to his friends, renewed a train of tender sorrows which would have at the moment been too powerful for a folio of moralities, even from father Arthur,

Tho' truths divine come mended from his tongue.

But, what will to thee appear a yet greater weakness—if indeed thou art not a delineator—father Arthur, knowing and feeling as he did the history of this quadruped, dismounted in an instant from his vaulting steed of eloquence, and when Caroline exclaimed, “ Ah my poor, poor Fitz ! and art thou come to be of the chapel-house party—or did my—my—my—did—Mr.—Henry---Fitz---orton send

send thee to comfort us?"—Father Arthur forgot to reason, but remembered to feel. To him, to Dennison, and to themselves, yea and even to Floresco, it was in a moment discovered, that Olivia was as dear to Charles, and Henry to Caroline, as at any period of their lives; and had any corresponding testimony been wanting, the following miscellaneous converse would have arisen in proof. "Happy little creature, how sleek and smooth he looks!" said Caroline, continuing her caresses; "and have they been very tender to thee, poor fellow?"

"Sister," said Charles, as his hand followed Caroline's along the dog's glossy back, "Henry has told me such instances of my Olivia's—hem—hem—of Miss Clare's partial fondness for this little animal, that I am almost sorry he has quitted her, and yet is it not comfortable to look at any thing which has found favour in the eyes of those we love?"

Caroline blushed assent. "I am persuaded," cried the lieutenant, "the fair hand of
that

that sweet girl has honoured him in this manner a thousand times !”

“He slept in Henry’s bed-chamber,” said Caroline.—

“The ’squire and young madam were fondling him by turns, even while I was at the castle,” interposed Dennison, “and methought the dog, when he lay down and whined piteously at my feet—which he did—seemed aware that all was not as it should be.” Caroline drew her cheek across the dog’s forehead, and Floresco went and brought him a sweet cake of his own preparing, then kneeling down to feed him, told him, whisperingly, “you no speak, ickle ting—you no speak—but young lady and maffer ’squire love somebody’s that you loves, and that loves you dearly.—I see dat as plainer than you ickle ting.”

While the good Floresco was thus employed, Olivia made her appearance at the chapel-house. She stood on the threshold of the door, which was open, and supporting herself with one hand by the door-handle, which

which trembled as she held it, she pointed with the other to the spaniel, as an apology for her intrusion. Then slightly curtesying, she ventured to step over the threshold, and with accents of hyblean sweetness, the bloom of a generous heart mounting into her cheek, she assured Caroline, "that the detention of her favourite lay upon her conscience, and she thought nothing could make her pardon possible, but coming herself to surrender him at its mistress's feet. It had the wicked feeling of robbing you of his little faithful heart, and what is there amongst the wide circuit of crimes so bad as to steal away the object of one's affections? But he is now restored, and you must try to forgive me."

Caroline felt the very anguish of a truth which reached a deeper sentiment than the loss or even the death of her spaniel could create. But to form any idea of the state into which Charles and his sister were thrown by this unlooked-for interview, with the cause of all their admiration and agony, you must have a heart, friend, that can enter
into

into their several situations as well in times past as present. So that, unless such internal evidence is at your command, this whole incident, which might otherwise have come quite home to "the business of your bosom," must be found miserably wanting. All that we can do for you, is, to describe the mere matters of fact, without a thousandth part of the appertaining emotions and passions, and if you have neither fancy or feeling to supply these, it is not our fault.

CHAPTER XXIX.

NETHER Charles nor Caroline were able to mark their welcome by a single word. They bowed, trembled, blushed, turned pale; endeavoured to reach a chair, attempted utterance, and failed in both: Dennison and father Arthur were scarcely more collected, and had it not been for the happy alertness and urbanity of Floresco, the hospitalities would have deserted the chapel-house on the first entrance of its lovely guest.

Olivia,

Olivia, by a very natural construction, attributed this general confusion, partly to the variety of embarrassing circumstances which now subsisted between the two families, and partly to the situation in which she found Charles and Caroline at the chapel-house, where she supposed they felt themselves as exiles almost within sight of the paternal home from whence they had been driven. In pursuance of which opinion, she begged to speak a few words to them apart. And being conducted into another room, by the trembling Charles, she gave the brother and sister each a hand, and with a frankness that spoke the soul, and in a voice whose sweetness was, in itself, an antidote to the poisons of life, she said, "We meet not as strangers: you and I, Caroline, have been friends from our infant days. Cruelly have our amiable designs been broken, but we have daily and hourly conversed with each other by secret and silent intelligence. I know we have, so it is vain to deny it. This is no time for ceremony or for concealments. Let us be ingenuous then: I have been greatly alarmed

at

at the discovery of a plot,"—here she assumed a graver air and accent—"a plot, which I am told, you have actually laid against the happiness of Henry and Olivia."

The scarlet of a fever, and the pale of death, tyrannized alternately in the cheeks of Charles and Caroline.

"You are, I find, about to rob," continued Olivia, addressing them both, "two of your most sincerely admiring friends, of what their souls hold most dear.—"

There is no adequate expression to the looks of Caroline or Charles.

"Rob us, I say, of our inalienable property in your *society*," resumed Olivia, to the infinite comfort of her hearers, who felt relieved past utterance; "I am come, therefore," she added, "not only to restore your favourite, but, as a friend, to claim the interest which you, Mr. Stuart, promised to create for me in Caroline's affections; nay I come to assert myself those claims of sympathy—of childhood—of softest, tenderest hours—and if they meet any congenial advocate in your bosoms, will be instantly rewarded with an assurance,

assurance, that this cruel convent scheme—for there begins your confederacy against us—will be wholly laid aside—and a more social plan, which has been some time forming in my mind—adopted; a plan, my *dear* friends,—you must allow me to call you so,—which includes the felicity of all; and, though it is not yet mature, I can make no farther progress in it, till you here promise me you will not throw an insurmountable bar in my way, by putting your plot upon our peace in execution, and so throw down my new raised edifice, and bury the happiness of Henry and Olivia in its ruins.

“In short,” continued Olivia, glowing as she proceeded, “my heart, dear and suffering friends, is in the history of all your unmerited misfortunes and disappointments; and I truly consider them as much my own, as if I even had created them, and am as sincerely interested in their removal.”

The surprise and puzzling kind of perplexed astonishment, which seized on Charles and his sister, became again inexpressible. The words seemed to involve much more “than met the ear;” and although Olivia intended

intended them to express, with the most liberal simplicity, her general knowledge of the abbey calamities, the auditors believed they included even a discovery of their unfortunate loves, to which they supposed—judging from themselves—that Olivia had determined to become a martyr.

“It is decreed, by all the powers of honour and tenderness,” said she, “that the castle must make reparation to the abbey; and, by a union of fortunes, fates, and affections, be for ever of one family.”

The equivoque increased. “And why this trembling reserve?” said Olivia. “I will prove to you, sweet Caroline,” said she, carrying her hand to her heart, and gently holding that of Charles—“I will prove to you both, that this is to be done consistently with the nicest feelings and duties to suffering friends below, and pitying angels above.”

The Gordian knot was now to the apprehension of Charles and Caroline less difficult to untie.

“After this confession,” continued Olivia, “it remains with you to send me back to the castle

castle the most successful or the most disappointed of human beings. I ought to tell you, however, that your compliance will enable me to make our friend Henry of human beings the happiest, and it will be accompanied by the sweetest surprise in the world; for though I know, and you cannot be ignorant, that it is the nearest wish and design of his heart, that ample atonement should be made to you for all the pangs you must have undergone, before, alas! you were driven to this extremity, the distress into which the news of your intention to steal yourselves away from us, has so disordered him, as well it might, that he can think upon nothing decisive, and my proud heart, aspiring to gain the conquest of your promise not to leave us, and my earnest desire to carry the tidings of my victory to him myself, has made me dare to undertake the whole matter without his knowing or even suspecting it; so that I have my plot too, you see. Judge, therefore, what a generous occasion presents itself for your exalting me in his esteem. If you permit me in this great instance to assure him

of your friendship, and it can be done in no other way, than by such a family compact as I have suggested, you will thereby raise the value of mine, and my obligations to you will be everlasting."

What was to be said? what done by Caroline or Charles? Even what was done and said;—Nothing. The mystery was inextricable, yet a strange opening of trembling light, of hope and of happiness, all which had been yielded to the influence of despair, seemed to break in upon them like a vision, or rather day-dream which they knew not how to encourage or dispel.

"All I at present solicit," rejoined Olivia, earnestly, "is your promise to adopt no fatal measure, that may put it even beyond your own power to make us and yourselves, I trust, happy. O! grant me this, and I will fly with the wing of affection to mature my project: but why do I talk of your granting what neither of you can in conscience refuse? You owe it to yourselves—you owe it to Henry Fitzorton—you owe it to me. Betwixt Henry and you, Charles, there subsists
even

even a brotherly affection; and my beating heart tells me, it is not wholly without a kindred emotion in the bosom of Caroline. I anticipate then your full compliance, and will now therefore go on with my darling scheme, of which you shall have the particulars at my next visit. But remember, you have both looked a complete assurance, that we have no more to fear from your former insufferable scheme."

Though it might be sincerely said, that during the delivery of these sentiments,

Soft as the dew from heaven distills,

Her gentle accents fell;

the disorder, surprize, and a thousand sensations, known only to the minds which feel them, wholly took from Charles and his sister the power of speech. Olivia saw a variety of symptoms, part of which she thought auspicious, and part she feared were unfavourable to her designs. Interpreting, however, their silence into a kind of modest assent, she would have now hurried out of the apartment, had not Charles, with a melancholy but determined

mined air, assured her there were invincible reasons, which, he feared, must for ever interrupt her benevolent endeavours to unite the families of Fitzorton and Stuart.

“ I know every one of those reasons,” rejoined Olivia, maintaining her point ; “ but they are all to be reconciled, my good sir; they are all to be reconciled.” The riddle appeared now resolved. The generous animation with which Olivia repeated this assurance, brought into the mind of Charles the most delicious of all human delusions. His fancy had been achieving wonders all the time ; and now he even supposed (what cannot the tender heart ?) that Henry had, like himself, forgot every thing but love, and had told the story of all their hapless passion to Olivia, who had determined, at whatever risk, to save them all from the threatened despair. “ O ! thou unheard-of excellence ! Is it possible,” said he, throwing himself at her feet. “ Shall we then owe to thy unparalleled sweetness the mighty blessing ?”

Olivia, believing his rapture proceeded from the prospect of being restored again to

the arms of his friend, replied, with an ardour scarcely inferior to his own, "That she was satisfied there was not a wish, which he, or his enchanting sister, could form, but the proposal she should speedily make would gratify, to its utmost height.

The strength of this expression, seeming to dispel all that remained of the mystery, moved the firm spirit even of Caroline, who, in her turn, ceased for an instant to remember her scheme of sequestration, and all the resolves she had made to bid the world an eternal farewell.

But, alas ! it was the rhapsody only of a few blissful moments ; yet those, who have hearts to feel, might weigh those moments against a thousand insipid years, and find, in all the dull and freezing truths of the latter, nothing to balance the short-lived, but heartfelt transports of this delusive joy.

Obtrude not upon these children of imagination thy more sober reasonings, sage reader, in this their delirium. As well mightest thou argue with a fever, or declaim against the fury of a whirlwind. Avaunt thy cata-

logue of cold interrogations.—“Have they forgot,” sayst thou, in the spirit of a man, supinely stretching in the elbow-chair of apathy; “have they forgot the long epistle of victorious virtue which they sent, in the conviction of their souls, to the castle of Fitzorton? Has the upright Charles, and the correct Caroline, so soon annihilated what appeared to be engraven on their heart of hearts? Where is their heroism, their fortitude, their philosophy, and that nice internal sense which their parading historian would have persuaded us had prompted the glorious sacrifice, which virtue demanded?” Yes, redoubted querist, all these things were, for the moment, as if they had never been. Enslaved by a delicious impossibility, which the heart, inly stirred, made practicable as the plainest point in nature, fancy and affection opened to them the gates of hope, and moved, with more than the lightning’s celerity, those bars which their own reason—peradventure, with all its pliability, strong as thine—had so solemnly, and so recently, declared were more immoveable than the everlasting hills. In a word, their heroism,

heroism, fortitude, and philosophy, were what thine would have been, even if thou art more intrepid than Achilles, more gigantic than Ajax, and a better reasoner than Nestor.

CHAPTER XXX.

“ALAS!” exclaimed Caroline, “whatever destiny intends for us, we must be lost to every thing that is good and lovely in human nature, before we are unmindful of Olivia’s kindness; and her friendly wishes will be in the nature of blessings to us, go where we may.”

They had by this time reached the other apartment; and Olivia, supposing she had gained ground, proceeded to pursue her advantages, then insensibly slid to the door of the chapel-house, and was stealing off without seeming to move away. Charles and Caroline as insensibly followed. “We were all formed to be of one family,” said Olivia! “Surely your hearts must convince you of this! How happy shall we be, when our arrangements are made! Can any thing

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interrupt

interrupt it ! Methinks I see, as in a mirror, the times to come. We are all seated by our fire-side ; the arts, the pleasures, and the affections, smiling before us. We shall be all in alliance, in friendship, in love."

They were now in the path that led from the chapel-house to the castle, Charles, perhaps without knowing it, pressed one of Olivia's hands to his lips, and the other was thrown round the waist of Caroline. In this manner they walked on, colouring the fairy paradise of their fancy more highly at every step. Ah ! that it should be necessary for Reason to advance with a frown, and dissolve the charm ! Yet, how quickly is it done ? Under influence of any vehement affection of the heart, the step is quick, and almost keeps pace with the emotion. It is incredible how soon our three friends were within the bounds of Fitzorton. Olivia had now placed herself in the middle, wreathing her lovely arms within those of Charles and Caroline. Had a sentiment, soft as that which Charles might wish to inspire, animated her bosom, its effects would have been demonstrated

monstrated nearly in the same way in which she now proved the loving-kindness, compassion, and sympathy of her gentle heart, which all the time felt only what such feelings allowed; nor had it one throb of a tenderer passion for any mortal but her Henry.

The spaniel led the way.—“See,” said Olivia, smiling, “that dear thing certainly knows our convention; I find our George calls him Little Fitz. The time, I trust, is not far off when every one of us shall assert our share of property in that worthy little fellow. Nay, and I predict, that the prospect from the castle to the abbey, will, one day, be as clear and bright as it is now obscure and cloudy. Methinks half the grand avenue, even to the little side alcove, which is never to be forgotten, looks full of promise already.”

Here was a stroke of recollection, which, though intended by Olivia as a memento of her affecting scene with Henry, brought back to Caroline’s heart ten thousand feelings, of which Olivia had not the most distant idea.

Such converse brought them absolutely within a few paces of the castle gates; at which all three, who had seen and heard nothing but themselves, expressed equal surprise.—“O!” cried Olivia, “that the moment were now come in which we might all be presented to one another, hand and heart, in the way each best desires.—And why not? It is but anticipating the event, and in such a cause—”

Olivia’s hand was upon the gate bell, and a single sound was given, just as Caroline, from some secret impulse, trembled, and begged her to stop.

It was a tumultuous and indefinable, as well as indescribable moment. Charles and Caroline Stuart, conducted by Olivia Clare, were at the gate of that castle which they intended never more to approach.

A new and unexpected hope, naturally arising out of a chain of misconceptions, as naturally corresponding to their wishes, suddenly expelled despair. Every passion, which was before refused admittance, re-entered the bosom, an almost-invited guest, and even Reason seemed, at length, to nod assent.

“I have

"I have a thought," said Olivia, "how it may even now be contrived;" and, without farther warning, she rung the bell with a force which that thought seemed to inspire.

"Heavens! what have you done?" exclaimed Caroline, attempting to stop the sound, the vibrations trembling from her disordered pressure.

"Away with reserves!" said Olivia.—"My long-promised, long-postponed hand will be given to my beloved Henry when—O, my heart! there he is!—you may see him through the iron work of the gate—how rejoiced will he be to see you!—I will undertake to explain.—Stop—hide yourselves a moment;—stand behind me, that his surprise may be the greater."

Charles and Caroline were shot through and through by the second sentence: that sentence, like despair and death, dissolved their fairy dream in a moment; they had no ear for more. Their delusion, their weakness, their affection, their disappointment, their misery, were by those few words made palpable; and had the gate of the castle, and

the castle itself fallen upon them, it would have been deemed a tender mercy. Luckily for them, Olivia was too much busied to notice their consternation, in what she had now, at a moment's warning, to say and to do; and too much taken up with the approach of Henry, who, catching a glimpse of Olivia, ran to receive her, exclaiming—"My sweet Olivia, I have been watching here this hour! We thought we had lost the treasure of the castle."

According to Olivia's arrangements, Charles and Caroline were so situated that Henry could not see them in his advance; she heard, therefore, the tender greeting, which was in strict conformity to Henry's wish to love, and oath, to live for her alone.

Henry opened the gate—Olivia immediately presented her friends. They had retreated several paces. Henry saw, and became, in an instant, a statue of astonishment! Olivia ran, and, taking their hands, would have advanced. "His joy, you see, is too great," said she.—"I will for ever love and bless you, Olivia," replied Caroline—exerting herself—

herself—"if you will go with Henry to the castle, and suffer us to return to the chapel-house. It is for the ease and happiness of all that this be done! But it must be instantaneous; for I see not only Mr. Fitz-orton, but all the family and servants are pouring upon us, and we shall be disgraced and exposed beyond the pardon even of Olivia."

This petition was made in a manner, and in a voice, that rendered compliance necessary. Olivia believing the disgrace and exposure alluded to, suggested by a too deep, though delicate sense of their situation as exiled children from the abbey, and the behaviour of their father at the castle, answered—"You shall be obeyed—Heaven forbid I should violate your worthy feelings! Go, then, but remember your promise; and be prepared to expect the fulfilling of mine.—You must leave our beloved friends to their own plans at present, and hear mine,"—said she to Henry, who was now close behind her, and whose eyes followed Charles and Caroline, now turning sadly into the path they had

had so chearily trod a few minutes before;—
“you must not pursue them, for my word is given. The series of mysteries shall, in due time, be explained.” There was not opportunity for saying more; as John, Lady Fitz-orton, and Mr. Clare, with several of the servants summoned by the bell, were gathering about Olivia.

She had outstaid her time more than two hours, and was surprised to hear that dinner was over, or rather had been sent away untasted, each individual wondering what had become of the fair truant. She gratified their curiosity without betraying either her own designs or the emotions of her chapel-house friends, laying the whole blame on herself for having neglected to take her watch—“that is, to wind it up,” added she, as she perceived her father putting it to his ear, declared it ticked.—“Really?” said she, “does it, indeed? None of my excuses then will do, it seems: well, then, I must own myself a truant, and beg pardon.” She supplicated and was forgiven. And could must be the reader who is not convinced she would have

have had neither eye or ear to time had a thousand clocks reminded her that dinners of ortolan and deserts of paradise waited her return.

Charles and Caroline, save by ejaculations, spake not till they regained the chapel-house; and then desiring to pass an uninterrupted hour in their separate apartments, they retired to compose afflicted hearts, in the best manner they could.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHEN Henry had an opportunity to converse with Olivia alone—an opportunity which he sought with unusual diligence, for his thoughts fastened on the foregoing scene with an eagerness, that, had Olivia been endued with one particle of suspicion, or been furnished with any clue to it, would have discovered the cause to lie deeper in his bosom than the interests of friendship.—“ I see,” said Olivia, “ you are earnest to know the history of my rencontre with your friend and
13 mine,

mine, my Henry ; and though a train of little untimely events have gone blundering on, to the disorder of the whole scheme, which I intended to have kept a profound secret, even from you, till all was ripe for discovery, I cannot now but let you into the whole matter ; for indeed, Henry, I would not give you the pain of one moment's suspense for all the schemes upon earth, and even this was plotted for your felicity."

Hereupon she related all the circumstances, from each of which the goodness of her mind and the tenderness of her heart were displayed so clearly, and with such force, that penetrated as Henry was to the quick, with the unexpected sight and as sudden departure of Caroline, the very glimpse of whom conjured up myriads of ideas which arose like the spectres of departed joy, as from their tombs, in his bosom, he embraced her with the utmost tenderness, and swore she was too generous, too good, and that he was utterly unworthy of her. " But though the plan is impossible," added he, " your kind wishes can, in this instance,

stance, be accomplished :—I shall for ever cherish a remembrance of them in my grateful heart.”

“ Why do you talk of impossibilities ?” resumed Olivia ; “ Charles held the same language ; he, too, said it was impossible ! Where, pray, is the difficulty of our making two of the best people in the world a part of us ? I should blush with shame for us if I thought we could dispose of more than a third of our income on ourselves, and I know of but one difficulty in appropriating some of the surplus, and that is in reconciling the acceptance of it to minds as proud and noble as our own. But this we must meditate upon. I have gained, meanwhile, the one thing needful—Charles and Caroline’s implied, though not expressed promise, not to leave the chapel-house till you or I visit them again.”

Henry, the more he heard, the more he admired the generous speaker ; but with an agitation that rather seemed to proceed from a tenacity of opinion, than any thing else in the judgment of Olivia, still insisted on the impracticability of the thing.

“ I pro-

“ I protest,” exclaimed Olivia, warmly, “ you do not enter into my views with half the spirit, my dear Henry, I might have expected, from your friendship to the Stuarts, and your love to me. I could almost call you unkind—for is not Charles your friend, and is not Caroline his sister?—By-the-bye, Henry, I am astonished how you have guarded your heart against the—I should have thought—*unerring* darts of this all-conquering girl. Though the deep shades of melancholy are cast about her, one discovers such ineffable sweetness, grace, and beauty, through their veils, that I really could not help thinking, as I beheld her, nothing but the prepossession or prejudice of old habits—such as our being born, bred, reared, and educated together—could account for it;—and although I verily believe my heart would break, and my death ensue—Heaven knows, I hope it would—on the loss, or the slightest abatement of your tenderness for me, I should have enough of candour in the midst of my despair almost to justify the infidelity that would, nay, that ought—for how is the loss of Henry Fitzorton to be repaired?—

paired?—yes that *ought* to shorten my days! Your affection has taught me to be ambitious, Henry. As you have no superior in your sex, methinks—vain and proud wish!—I would be the first of mine:—methinks, for your sake, I would be a Caroline. How infinite must be your attachment, to prefer an Olivia! Precious, precious preference! which at once makes me proud and humbles me!”

In this artless and animated address, as there were so many points to wound, and so many to heal, Henry struck a kind of balance between both; and in the compromise, his gratitude and admiration of Olivia seemed almost to outweigh his love of Caroline, and made it even more impossible than it had ever been before, to declare in whose favour the trepidations of the scale preponderated.

The conversation ended with Henry's desiring to know the particulars of Olivia's plan.

“The particulars,” replied Olivia, “would run into too much length for the time allowed us to detail it; but the substance is—if it met your approbation—to make Charles and Caroline

roline as independent as ourselves ; but that only you and I should be concerned, or be in confidence of the means. Indeed it would be yet better if the parties themselves could imagine it came from some fund on which they had a claim. For this reason, I blame my hasty visit to the chapel-house, but you terrified me with the thoughts of their leaving us for ever. With your assistance, however, it may not yet be too late to redeem my rashness. At all events my heart is set upon their remaining amongst us."

Tell us, reader, if thou thinkest the ancient epicure Sardinapalus, or the modern voluptuary Quin, who is said to have expressed a wish that his throat had been a mile in length and every inch of it palate—Tell us, if the Grecian Alexander, who conquered worlds, or the Roman Nero who rejoiced to throw them away, could, at any time of their lives, boast a feeling equal to that which possessed the mind of this amiable young woman while projecting to rebuild the fortunes of two persons, whom she valued only on account of their virtues and misfortunes, and as
they

they were dear to the man she loved? If thy heart be as the unmelting snows on the mountains of Scandinavia, thaws it not at the contemplation of such goodness? And if we tell thee, that Henry Fitz-orton—touched to the inmost recesses of his soul at what he heard, dropped upon his knees, as in homage to a superior Being, burst into tears of consciousness, and with a fervour more glowing even than love can excite in some bosoms—renewed his oath to live only for Olivia—wilt thou not own he did as thou wouldest have done? If thou wouldest have done less, renounce thy claims on humanity.—If thou thinkest thou wouldest have done *more*, in like circumstances, thou hast not known—and oh, mayest thou never know!—the force of sublime passions in contention; friendship for one woman and love for another—and both warring at once in thy bosom—nor hast thou been, like him, compelled by every principle of honour, good faith, and piety, to wed the former and renounce the latter—the renounced, alas! still the sole object

ject of his doating heart, just torn from his longing arms and straining eyes.

But the generous romance of Olivia's adventure increased the griefs she intended to heal, or rather tore open again those deep-mouthed wounds which she little supposed had bled so long; much less did she imagine her virtuous self the innocent cause. On this subject, her "ignorance was assuredly her bliss," and it would not have been "folly" only, but wickedness in the extreme, to have "made her wife."

Henry, to do him justice, now concealed from her with the most generous and tender care, so soon as he found no discovery had taken place at the chapel-house, all that could lead to a fact, which he every hour received some fresh conviction, would, were it but furnished, plant an eternal thorn in the breast of the woman he had sworn to a dying father, who took his oath to the "registering angel," that he would make his wife, and whom even in the storm of passion which shook his heart, he felt had claims upon him independent of all bonds.

Yet,

Yet, Olivia made this necessary concealment of Henry's emotions the more difficult; she imputed the occasional cloud that, in despite of his utmost caution, overshadowed his brow, and the involuntary sigh that stole from his bosom, solely to the loss of his father Sir Armine, and the absence of his beloved friend Charles; a day seldom passed without her reminding him that the virtues of the former ensured him that heaven to which his soul had ascended, and from whence it looked benignly down, and blessed that forgiving spirit which led his beloved Henry to succour the children of his mortal foe, whose vices rendered those children the more perfect objects of pardon and of love.

"Certain I am," would she say, lifting her beautiful eyes to heaven, "Sir Armine approves all we may or *can* do for those afflicted and deeply injured beings. His sacred form was before my mind's eye, as I entered the chapel-house—he smiled, methought, as I rose above the shrinking diffidence of my own timid nature, and the fancy that he did so, gave me confidence in what I spoke. As
I came

I came back, such a glow spread over my heart, that I have since considered it as an emanation sent from the bright region in which he now resides, to signify that even God himself, in whose sacred presence he now moves, pronounced what I had undertaken was good. Your image too, dearest Henry, came in with its encouragements. Henry will be so surprized—so pleased, thought I—O my little offering of good will is abundantly overpaid! Why, Henry, will not every body do kind things! since the smallest urbanity is sure to be returned in bliss a thousand fold! Virtue seems to me to be common interest, my friend, and all the powers of earth and heaven reward it with happy feelings even to usury. Sweet, dejected, drooping Caroline! noble-hearted, generous Charles! how infinitely am I already indebted to ye! How can I repay my obligations?"

Indeed, every object that presented itself was productive of something designed to create the felicity of that heart which it kept in continual agitation. As she ended the above

effusions, which were poured forth on the very evening of the eventful day that she arrived from the chapel-house, she cast her eyes on that little adherent who has already been so fruitful of adventure in the course of this history.—“As I live,” said she, “this dear little Fitz is with us again! He already anticipates the time when we shall all be of one house, and even now considers himself as one of the family. But, methinks, he ought to have gone back with his sweet mistress too, now she is unhappy.”

It was impossible for Henry not to be at once distressed and delighted by these kind revivals of what it was for the happiness of both Olivia and himself to forget.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MEANTIME the amiable brother and sister, whom we so lately reconducted to the chapel-house, had a conference with father Arthur as soon as they were able to appear before him. The subject was, their prepara-

tions to leave the neighbourhood. They ingenuously related to him the particulars of their discourse with Olivia, nor did they conceal the strong emotions of their hearts.

“It is time to make an escape from ourselves,” said Charles. “Our hearts are not to be trusted. Every hour we continue here is replete with pain and peril; and the very air we breathe is full of temptation. I cannot answer for myself if I remain any longer in this strait betwixt Scylla and Carybdis—the abbey and the castle; and my sister concurs with me in thinking, that when she is properly and honourably placed, something may be determined as to myself. Let us then lose no time, for I will honestly confess, a second visit from Olivia, which she has given us reason to expect, would perhaps prove too strong for all that reason, piety, or prayer could urge.”

“A second rencontre of that kind would, at least, afflict us both, to no good end,” said Caroline; “and as my fixed and solemn purpose is to go, the sooner that purpose is fulfilled the better.”

Caroline

Caroline uttered these few words with much delay and difficulty. The sight of Henry Fitzorton, and the contest it produced in her gentle bosom, had thrown her into such a state of agony, that she remained several hours speechless in her chamber.

Late on the following day she arose and came into the hall of the chapel-house, pale almost as if she were indeed in her shroud, and feeble even to staggering. But her principles knew no weakness; and what was due to virtue she still resolved to pay, without one appeal from the rigours of justice to the softness of love.—“O father Arthur!” said she, “We have confided with you our hearts—dispose of us before any discovery takes place which may make the angel-hearted Olivia as wretched as ourselves. Perhaps, already something has transpired from the late fatal interview. We rely on your instant services. To your moral guidance, O dear adopted parent, we commit ourselves.”

Dennison, who was within the hearing of this, threw himself upon his aged knees, and embracing by turns those of Charles and

father Arthur, and then taking the hand of Caroline, humbly entreated, that since his dear young mistress was resolved on retiring from the world, that it might be in some asylum where the attendance of an old and faithful servant would be admitted;—declaring, that if he were denied this, he would build himself a hut, at the gate of the convent that inclosed her, and live and die near the daughter of his dear lady, to whose family he had sworn the dedication of himself while life remained.—“ So it will be in vain to shut me out,” cried the old man; “ remember Miss, remember young ‘Squire, what I said in my letter,—‘ where she lives there will I live; where she lodges there will I lodge.’ —I know what the true Lady Stuart, as she lay dying, said,—I shall never forget it—‘Dennison,’ said she, ‘poor Dennison, you are an old standard of my dear father’s family, and must needs love my children;’ and then she whispered something about what might come to pass—what, alas! has happened—sure she was a prophetess! I am sure she is a saint, and a spirit in heaven, at the right hand
of

of the Lord God, as sure as I am now speaking upon earth.—Reverend Sir, do not think of letting me leave my young lady. If you part me from her, my heart will break, and my death shall be upon your head—aye, I would say so, if you were my father by blood.”

“We will all go, my honest fellow,” exclaimed Arthur, melted with his earnest and simple eloquence, and assisting Charles and Caroline to raise him up:—“I have already been turning the matter in my mind, and think it behoves all of us to depart, for a time at least, from a place which is, as you say, my dear child, beset with danger. The day may arrive when some of us may return to it with joy. Be that as it may, I trust you will put yourselves wholly under my guidance; and convincing yourselves that I have your best interest, temporal and eternal, in view, I must have your promise to submit unquestioned, however mysterious may be my seemings, to what I shall propose, and to follow wherever I shall lead.”

Having vowed the most implicit and unlimited obedience, and Dennison's worthy mind being made easy, the rest remained with the good Arthur, who told them, that on the third day, counting from that in which he spoke, their route should be fixed, and their journey might begin on the morning of the fourth. In truth, the sagacious monastic had already made his arrangements; for he soon perceived the chapel-house would be no resting-place; and as well read in the weakness of the human heart, as in its strength, he thought it fool-hardiness to set virtue too severe a task, or impose on her approved votaries mere trials of strength—a saving knowledge this, which our spiritual guides do not always know, since numberless are the misfortunes and the crimes which have arisen from experimenting upon the principles, and as it were screwing them up “to the top of their bent,” to see what degree of tension they can bear, and laying in their way unnecessary difficulties. He had little to apprehend from the established rectitude of those whom he called and loved as his children; but now that he

he was more completely in the secret of their hearts, he said they were surrounded by snares which virtue herself had set, and that their own sensibility was lying in ambush to entrap them; a speedy refuge was, therefore, expedient, and his honest heart had been and was still diligent to prepare it.

But, short as was the space betwixt the determination and the departure of this little party, it was filled with incidents of great account to each individual.

The point was scarce agreed on, as to the time of setting out, ere True George, in that sort of haste which made him blow as if he was labouring with an asthma, and in which indeed he performed all his commissions, delivered a packet to Charles—gave several reverential bows, with like rapidity in distinct respect, to every one present—apportioning his bend to the degree of claim which each had on his affections, and then set off with the same speed he entered.

The billet contained these few words:

“Charles,

“That you may not suffer by surprise, ex-

pect, within an hour from your receipt of this, a friendly call from

JOHN FITZORTON."

Though the surprise was broken by this note of annunciation, the curiosity which it excited, as to what might be the motive of the visit, was extreme.

Charles read the billet aloud to his friends, and the expectation of something extraordinary became general. They knew, indeed, that the writer of it would say nothing without a meaning, and that his meaning was always characteristic of himself, apposite to some point that he believed to be strong and momentous. They laid no stress on the messenger's bustling address, for as it was a maxim of old Dennison's to do business a round trot, so was it young George's to fetch and carry messages at full gallop; but with this line of variation between the two, that Dennison generally, as has been noted, conversed with himself or others all the way going and coming, and George seldom spoke any sentence but that which made up his message, which he would in repetition mutter to himself, lest he should

should drop a syllable on the road, for miles together; and if the errand had nothing verbal in it, he would conduct himself exactly as he did at the chapel-house, on the delivery of John's billet.

From the hurry-scurry of George, therefore, nothing could be gathered by those who were acquainted with his paces, although these alone, to any one who knew him not, would have been sufficiently alarming to denote an affair of life or death; whereas, in fact, he would bring you a toothpick or a challenge with equal dispatch.

Yet no one at the chapel-house, except Charles, had seen John Fitzorton since the death of Sir Armine, or the conspiracy of Sir Guise. Charles silently interpreted the interview, partly to his delay in returning to the regiment, and partly to disregard of the captain's admonitions. Caroline, knowing John's high sense of honour and insult, had her silent fears also.

While they were involved in the labyrinth of these conjectures, the object of them appeared, to the moment of his appointment;

and after a more respectful bow than it was his practice to give, and which was a deference he paid sometimes to real misfortunes, but never to the affectation of them, nor indeed to false pretensions of any kind, he desired to exchange a few words with Mr. Stuart, and they went out together.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“**L**IEUTENANT,” said John, “I hate letter-writing—not the trouble, but the vexatious inefficiency of it. It multiplies words, and embarrasses meaning; to explain which, we run into replies and rejoinders, till we imperceptibly involve ourselves in a correspondence. The chaos of obscurity is then complete. I come, therefore, to answer your resignation personally: I accept that resignation: I think I should have acted as you have done, in your situation. You have done nothing to dishonour the commission you received; but I do not see how you could have publicly held it to the satisfaction of your private feelings,

ings, which are not only the best judges, but the surest rewards and punishments of a man's actions."

Charles's cheek began to glow.

John paused, and extended his hand, which Charles met half way.

"It would be tyranny," continued John, "to impose on the son of the wretched and pestilent man, who has contributed to murder my father, any thing that has the air or weight of an obligation."

"O, insupportable!" said Charles, stretching out both his arms to their utmost width, as if to figure the immeasurable burden removing from his bosom.

"Your lieutenancy is, therefore, elsewhere disposed," proceeded John; "and of your father's attempt on the sacred life of mine—but let me hurry from the dreadful circumstance! Alas! not millions of such lives as —but I will not name him to you—could atone even for imagining the death of Sir Armine Fitzorton. Why is there not a law, my friend, that the parent should consign to immediate death a thankless child, and the

dishonoured child be the sanctioned executioner of an unnatural father."

"What less can expunge the spot which infamy entails on a family to all posterity!" ejaculated Charles.

"Posterity itself," replied John, "and the example of children like my friend Charles---but all that was in the power of Sir Guise has, reluctantly, been done. This packet,"---here John took some papers from his pocket, and desired Charles would deposit them in his own,—"this packet will explain every thing, I trust, to your satisfaction, because it is both to me and to you an act of justice, and not of obligation. I am, as haply you suspect, put, by your own lips, and from my own observation, in the most secret sorrows of your heart. They are profound—they are pitiable—but—they are not without a parallel."

"Alas! no!" said Charles; "they find one no less bitter in the bosom of ——" Charles was just about to pronounce the name of his sister, when, checking himself, he left the sentence unfinished. He thought it unnecessary to commit or involve Caroline, the
know.

knowledge of whose similar disappointments could lead to no good effect; since, like his own, her passion was hopeless. It was one of the maxims settled by John's noble disposition, as a rule of conduct, never to make a good mind betray itself; nor, if possible, to suffer a bad one to escape its own snare. In the latter case, he would hurry on a rogue to confession of villainy by every terrifying power. In the former, he would prevent confession by all the kind interventions that offered. He saw the worthy Charles embarrassed; and without pushing the generous soul into painful declaration, or waiting to gratify curiosity, he relieved him, by saying, "Yes, dear Charles; they find another where possibly you little expected—in the bosom of a friend—even in him who now gives you the hand of sympathy," said John.

"In your's!" exclaimed Charles, with all the emphasis of amazement.

"Even so," responded John. "You are amongst the number of those who impute to the coldness of my nature what proceeds from the vigour of my discipline. Imitate that vigour---

vigour—emulate that discipline. To such an end I disclose and confide it with you. I have been, for eleven years, perhaps I am still, as much devoted to Olivia as yourself, or as Henry, I now find, is to Caroline. Had I not discovered her affection for my brother Henry, I would have tried the fortune of my rougher heart, or at least ruder manners, and might possibly have been your rival. But her whole soul was anticipated; and had you, my friend, or had even an enemy of worth and honour, pre-engaged it, I would have acted as I have done—*promoted her happiness with the object of her affection.* This, my friend, is not the failly of a hero, but the common duty of an honest man; for though it were to be wished she could have inspired the man of her choice with an equal passion, she had better wed a man of honour whom she tenderly loves, than one to whom she is wholly indifferent; which must have been the case, had she fallen to the lot of either you or me, my friend. To struggle honourably, and silently,” continued John, “to convert unavailing hope, and unwarranted jealousy, into an honest endeavour
your

your to serve her with the man of her heart, was all that remained."

Charles admitted the fact, but gave a heavy sigh at the words "wholly indifferent;" for though he knew these words described the truth of his own case, and had resolved never to see Olivia again, he could not hear that truth without an uneasy sensation.

"Any other conduct, you are aware," resumed John, "would have aggravated my disappointment, and driven Olivia to the necessity of refusing me; the distress of which to her, and the disgrace to me, would have been equal."

Charles considered this inference as incontrovertible, yet could not help thinking the worthy speaker more a hero than a lover.

"I therefore prosecuted my plan," continued John,— "a severe system of self-denial: but do not think that I suffered less on that account. I have an aversion to confidences in sorrow, whether from pride, or a better motive, I know not; but miserable feelings are best kept to one's self, methinks, though I will communicate matter that is comfortable
with

with any man. These remarks are superfluous, as it is impossible either you or I can indulge a farther hope of Olivia, who is now little less than my brother's—wife."

Betwixt the utterance of the words "brother" and "wife," there was a long line of circumvallation drawn by John's heart, which now began visibly to sound the alarm.

"Ah! my friend," ejaculated he, "that Henry were as sensible to her merits as either you or I!—but she cannot make him miserable! Alas! if she should, in the end, be so herself! that would be a hard stroke on us both." John took out his handkerchief, and applied it to that part of his face which demanded it not, violently protesting at the same time, that the cold in his head—then first discovered—almost distracted him.

"As---I---say---as," continued John; "excuse me, Charles---I am, as you must perceive, getting quite hoarse---I shall not be able to speak!---In short, let us remember---let us never forget---let us have it eternally in recollection---In short, you see clearly—"

"I do, alas! I do, most clearly," said Charles.

"These

"These keen easterly winds, my friend, force the water from one's eyes," exclaimed John.

Charles, looking on the weather-cock of the chapel, which stood opposite to the spot where they discoursed, and seeing it point due west, whispered to his own heart, that John was no more of a philosopher than himself.

But John tried again---"Let us remember," taking Charles by the hand, "that we are brother-sufferers---brother-soldiers---and men of honour. You see how I bear it, my friend, ---bear it as---"

Three hems---ending in as many coughs ---could not stifle John's sensations; for the tears, as if in perfect despite of his efforts to conceal them, streamed along his face; and it was in vain that he pretended, in this extremity, to substitute a weakness in the eyes as the cause of that effusion which flowed from the tenderness of his heart. Perceiving this, ---"Behold," said he, "one of the many curses of what is called social sorrow. I have had ten thousand of these momentary infirmities

mities in my solitary walks---in my chamber
 ---in my tent---and even in the field of battle,
 where public duty prevented private observa-
 tion; yet still it was an affair of the *secret*
 heart that involved none but myself, and did
 not expose the mind that agonized. Not that
 I ought to be ashamed of it," continued John,
 resuming himself; "for with this hand will
 I give away, at the altar, that of Olivia, to
 him only whom she can love; and in order,
 my friend, to prove, that you and I love her
 still, love her as we ought to do, let us take
 every opportunity to make her husband--"

John declared a fly had got into his throat.

"Her husband as proud of---of---of pos-
 pos---possessing her--"

The fly had somehow leapt from his throat
 again into his eyes.

"As---happy, I say, as---had it pleased
 Heaven to have inclined her heart to either of
 us---we---should have been--"

The latter part of this sentence, in point of
 tone and emphasis, was many degrees lower
 than the former. One was in unison with the
 loftiest sentiment of the human mind, the
 other

other attuned to the trembling vibrations of the human heart. But it was the same noble composition of nature in all her grand and tender movements.

John rallied, and was re-assuming the philosopher, when observing Charles shake his head, "I will yield the point," exclaimed John—answering to that significant shake. "We have talked each other into this condition. Another blessed effect of confidence! I told you what would come of it. I protest to you, Charles, more words have been wasted and more weakness displayed in this short interview, than in my eleven years of silent forbearance; and yet I confided only that you might not think your sufferings and situation unexampled. You are right, my friend, this is no moment to be magnanimous; yet our being men of sensibility, involved in similar disappointment, prevents not our being men of honour. We are in possession of each other's misfortune, and may secretly resort to one another for support and sympathy, should the approaching event require greater strength than our own."

John

John perceived that Charles's heart was full, but his arms open. He run into those with an ardency that was returned with an ingenuous zeal. The friends then bade each other farewell. John hastened back to the castle, first assuring Charles, "that he had but half performed his errand, and that he should see him and his party again, on some momentous business he could not then stay to impart."

"Noble, high-feeling, and high-thoughted man!" said Charles, apostrophizing in soliloquy as he passed on: "What a moment has he chosen for the discovery! He knew my domestic sorrows to be deep and mighty, the ruins of my fortune to be complete, the disgrace of my family to be desolating—and the agonies of my heart to swell almost to bursting; then, then it was that he came to separate the sufferer from the offender, to embrace me as an unfortunate friend, shew me that we were involved in one common calamity, and taught me to bear it—not by the stubborn example of the cynic's virtue, which is but another word for affectation or stupidity,

stupidity, but by convincing me he struggled with a disappointment mighty as my own!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

FROM the time that John Fitzorton had received the resignation of the lieutenancy, he was truly anxious to atone for the loss which that unfortunate young soldier, whom he at once loved and pitied, sustained by an action which he felt to be the consequence of a brave, delicate, and independent spirit. And on conversing with Henry, he found his brother officer labouring under the various ills and injuries which Charles himself recapitulated in his soliloquy. John, therefore, without wasting time or words, in barren and ostentatious compassion, or speaking to Henry a single word about tender disappointments, seriously, although silently meditated how he might essentially serve this young man, and his no less meritorious, no less suffering sister.

Indeed, his attachment to their virtues had all along been as sincere as the detestation

he

he had borne to the vices of their father, nor had any insults which he had himself sustained from the one, the power to affect his unprejudiced and clear-judging mind from what was due to the others. Not even the outrage of Sir Guise at Adfell forest shook his impartiality, although the interdicted particulars of that outrage, all fatal as they were, had come to his knowledge. No immediate opportunity, however, presented itself: it was a point of delicacy and difficulty; and John not only rejected confidence in his sorrows but his benevolence, whenever it could possibly be avoided; and till the hour of giving them effect, his most generous designs lay hid in his bosom. But the miscarriage of one, two, three, or three-and-twenty efforts, did not discourage him from going on till he succeeded; his maxim *then* was to impart the rise and progress of his lucky endeavours, considering the rest as irrelevant. He would however much oftener present the happy piece of fortune he had procured to the person deserving it, without annexing to it any history at all, which he usually considered as a bait for applause, on which

which he looked down with all the pride of a magnificent spirit.

Several days elapsed before John could satisfy himself as to the mode of redressing the grievances of his two friends at the chapel-house, although he was early determined that the chief author of the calamity should be instrumental in its relief.

At length, an accident brought about, without any difficulty, what had cost the persevering John so much labour in thought, and so much of that labour in vain.

The history must look back a little. Our companions in this work will not have forgotten that the person fixed on by John to carry his billet to Charles was True George.

That faithful fellow who had, in his heart, the very simplicity and sincerity of goodness, was accessory to the prosperity which was now about to gild the chapel-house. He had, with unspeakable assiduity, sought to wean the affections of Jenny Atwood from the unworthy object who too long possessed them, and place them in his own honest bosom; and though he made slow progress, he

he had *begun an impression*; the first visible mark of which was her suffering him to mention the baronet's name with a part of the indignation it deserved.

Indeed, the vile and abject spirit of her quondam lover, manifested both before and after the assassination-scheme, the base injustice practised against the respectable Fitz-ortons, and his own children, and more especially the marriage with Mrs. Tempest, and which was not like poor Jane's a mock, but *bona fide* a real wedding, after a time worked together for George's good. She began to find a kind of *relief* in his company, which had before been burdensome. She suffered his little attentions, which formerly she had declared were intolerable; and always in possession of her good-will and esteem for his virtues, she by degrees, and insensibly, encouraged his flame, not that she could yet be said to return his love.

She had still a child which had been the fruit of her former ill-requited and unfortunate passion, and by that tenure the faithless seducer had some hold on her maternal sen-

sibility: yet, she was pleased to merit the daily increasing tenderness of a worthy man.

One evening as George returned from an errand his master Henry had sent him on, Jenny perceived his eyes were filled with tears, which he in vain attempted to conceal.

"What is the matter, George?" said she in a voice softer than she had ever before addressed him, putting her handkerchief at the same time up to his face. Unable to make any reply, he sat for some moments rocking himself in a chair, and then broke forth into the following exclamation, interrupted by a torrent of grief, which had its fountain in his generous heart:

"I do not like, Mrs. Jenny, to bring up the name of that Sir—Somebody in your hearing, because I would not have you think I disparage *him* to make you have a better liking to *me*; but I would not have what he did no longer ago than yesterday to answer for, if I might have the whole world! no! not to have you."

"Yesterday!" repeated Jenny.

VOL. III.  "But

“ But I may as well speak of it as another,” said George. “ The unnatural—gentleman—no sooner brought home the madam, whom he had married, than he picked a quarrel with the poor Lieutenant and Miss Stuart, and *turned them out of doors* ! and the worthy popish doctor you have heard so much of, took them into his little chapel-house, where they now are almost distracted ; for thus runs the rumour in the parish.

“ The hard-hearted—person,” continued George, still sinking the name, “ even refused sending their wearing apparel ; this, also, was reported ; and if it had not been,” proceeded George, “ for my master, and good Mr. Dennison, they might have wanted a morsel of bread.”

“ Morsel of bread !” said Jenny. “ Gracious God !—Why, have not they 500 l. a-year each, left to them by Sir Marmaduke Stuart, their relation, in the West Indies ?”

“ Not they, poor souls ! nor five hundred farthings ; and as for Sir Marmaduke, I never heard of him before, nor I don’t believe they

they either. I thought my master Henry would have gone raving distracted mad, while he was speaking of them, though I found, thank God, he did not know the worst, which you may be sure, Mrs. Jenny,—I wish I might call you Jane, as I find, Sir—Somebody called you Mrs. Jenny—I did not, I say, tell my master the worst, and so, poor gentleman, he got up into his own chamber, that none of the family might see the trouble he was in—Ah, Jenny!”—“I thought you were to call me Jane, Mr. George,” sighed she—“Thank ye, Mrs. Jane,” answered George, bowing; “Ah! dear Mrs. Jane, there is a great deal of trouble that nobody but God Almighty sees—and Mr. Henry is a great sufferer, for all he is so kind spoken. ‘George,’ said his honour to me, ‘is the door fast?’ I went and locked it, trembling all the way, but saying never a word—‘George, if you would save me from dipping my hands in blood—in the blood of Sir Guise Stuart—take this purse, and give it to old Dennison, whom you will find at the chapel-house, and for your life speak not a word either to

Charles or Caroline.' As he pronounced these names, I thought his heart would have broke—'Speak not a syllable to any body, George.' Well, I was at the chapel-house, and back almost directly, and by good luck only saw Mr. Dennison—though *he* looked almost as bad as my master. I did not open my lips, but Mr. Dennison whispered—he feared it was all over with his young master and mistress."

"You astonish me," said Jane, "more and more at every word; certainly, unless Sir Marmaduke's will is good for nothing, by there being one of a later date, the son and daughter of a—a—certain person are in possession of 500*l.* a-year each—for I saw the will with my own eyes, but in the calamities that fell so thick on each other about that time, perhaps, Sir—Sir—Guise forgot the circumstance."

"What circumstance?" demanded George, eagerly.

"Why the will I just now spoke of; and if it be so, how fortunate shall I think myself in not having destroyed or lost it; and you
must

must know, my good George, that while I was living—alas! I then thought as innocently as happily—in London, I had occasion to look into a kind of travelling chest which belonged to Sir Guise, and which Mr. Valentine Miles's man brought, saying it was full of old papers, it must be put into a careful place, as some of the papers might be of consequence, and were to be sorted; and I remember on the afternoon Mr. Dabble the attorney had settled some law business, I observed Sir Guise throw several packets into that chest, telling me he would have a fire lighted the next time he came, and could spare an hour to overlook and burn most of that trumpery; but this was forgotten, and as the baronet was then in a great hurry to go out, the key was forgot also, which I myself put into my pocket, with an intention to give it Sir Guise the next time he came, but it went out of my head, and as the lodgings were scanty of drawers and such conveniencies, I put into it any thing that would otherwise have laid littering about; in tumbling over these, I misplaced some of the papers which Sir Guise had thrown in for burning,

burning, and was struck with these words on the back of one of them: 'Copy of Sir Marmaduke's will.' I don't know what possessed me to look into it, and though I could not very well make it out, I read sufficient to see it was much in favour of the baronet's children."

"But you have got the papers yet, you say," cried George; "with the blessing of God we may still recover their property. I have a thought, Mrs. Jane; you must be ruled by me."

"If no harm is intended Sir Guise, who, I am sure, cannot be to blame in this, I consent, George," exclaimed she.

"I dare not tell my master, Mr. Henry Fitzorton, of this, because I know the consequence; but you must let me mention it to his brother, Mr. Sir John—" so he usually called him since Sir Armine's death; "Mr. Sir John," said he, "is as firm as a rock, and as stout-hearted as a lion, yet goes quietly about a thing."

"Do any thing you like," said the agitated girl, "so as you rescue the poor injured creatures

creatures rights, though I fear it is too late; only do not let any harm come to Sir Guise, who was made to do whatever those lawyers thought proper; if any body has been to blame in this affair, it rests with me in not speaking of it before, which was only from thinking it of no consequence; for I recollect once mentioning it to Sir Guise, who said the business was taken care of, and I dare say he thought so; not that I pretend to understand these matters, nor I suppose he neither."

"May be so," cried George; "but I know who does as well as any lawyer in the land; so do you go and get the papers ready, dear Mrs. Jane, and leave the rest to me; but not a word to any living soul, and as to harm—God help us, we only want to do what is right, and would not wrong any body."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THIS affectionate conduct on the part of George, during the disclosure of a history

24

from

from which reproaches were expected, won extremely on the grateful heart of the timid Jane Atwood, who, on taking leave, recompensed him with a look that richly paid the cordial he had bestowed on her wounded spirit; and this was the first moment he dared to tell himself—I am not indifferent to her.

But the history, and the historian, as well as the new sensation which filled his heart, did not allow of his going to sleep, or even to bed. The morning beginning to dawn, he waited John's hour of rising with the utmost impatience; at length it came, and as John had past the night in fruitless meditations upon the mode of extorting some provision for poor Charles and his sister out of the father's daily dissipated finances, it was the crisis most favourable to the tidings that the worthy domestic had to communicate. To render all things pliant, John, weary with cogitations, adopting an idea this minute and rejecting it the next, had left his chamber at sun-rise and taken a meditative walk round a shrubbery that was fenced in by the park paling on one side, and by a quickset of hawthorns on the other,

other, running about a mile circularly from each wing of the house.—George triumphed in this opportunity, and desired permission to unfold to his honour a scene of villainy as bad as that of Guy Faukes—seeing it was against one of the best young gentlemen and gentlewomen in the country, aye in the world—Captain and Miss Stuart.

A man, already debating on a subject which interests his affections, eagerly catches at every thing that applies. John—we should ere this have marked his right of inheritance by calling him Sir John, but that, in his strong way, he forbid every one of the family to use any title that reminded them or him of so irreparable a loss as the death of Sir Armine Fitzorton; and whenever any one annexed to his name the title which that loss conferred on him, he would check the observance of that mark of respect with as stern a frown as new-made Honourables generally give to those who presume to neglect it: But the dignity of John Fitzorton depended on nothing external—He ordered George to follow him into a summer-house at the south corner of the shrub-

shrubbery, where the subsequent discourse passed between them.

“Relate every circumstance, George.”

“Only your honour will take it into consideration, that poor Mrs. Jane Atwood, who is the cause of the plot being discovered, comes to no harm; but indeed your honour will see she deserves none: and I have passed my word, afore God and Mrs. Jane, that should Sir Guise Stuart be found to have any hand in the matter, not to ‘peach so as to get him hanged, as to be sure he ought to have been long ago.”

John nodded assent. George related all that Jane had told him about the will, saying, at the close of his narrative, “I am glad at heart to see your honour takes it so well. I knew you would not fly out into hurry-scurry—Lord love his honour—as Mr. Henry would—but take your measures to get back what belongs to poor Captain and Miss Caroline more coolly and cunningly, an’t please your honour: and it was therefore, I thought to myself, says I, ‘George, you had better tell ‘Squire Sir John than ‘Squire Henry, about
this

this will.' And as to my Jane—that is—our Jane Atwood—I've done Jennying her, by permission—your honour feels she is as harmless in the affair as the new-born baby; and perhaps so is Sir Guise: but if it had not been for Jane, the thing might have been *smushed* up for ever---at least in this world."

John did not interrupt this story by a single question. What George called *taking it so well*, arose from the magnitude of the emotion. At some passages in the narrative, torrents of blood rushed into his cheeks, which the next moment were left of as death-like a pale as if there had not been one drop of that blood remaining in his body. He threw open the window, and thrust his head out for air---a common habit with him in desperate cases—and left it open till he was as often obliged to shut it, his teeth chattering and his hands shaking, as if the chills of death had come suddenly upon him. At length, collecting all his powers of self-controllment, he conferred an unusual mark of distinction on George, whom he shook by the hand---an honour never before granted to any domestic ;

Q 6

mestic; for though he was kind, considerate, and even bountiful to servants, his favours were always bestowed as if they came from the hand of a master, of which character he never lost the distinction or the awe.

Henry, on the other hand, was apt to condescend a little too much: it produced affection, but it sometimes engendered also undue familiarity, and relaxed the well-poised authority so necessary to be preserved inviolate. But George had a disposition not to be spoiled by *any* extremes of behaviour, and was a rare example---amongst tens of thousands which form the rule of subordinate pride, folly, and ingratitude---how far the enriching hand of simple Nature can store the heart with the principles of humility, honour, and goodness, not to be shaken by any interest, nor corrupted by any examples.

“I am going to my chamber, George,” said John; “follow me thither, when you have got the papers you speak of. Tell Jane Atwood, she ought to love and honour True George; and do you and she guard every syllable

syllable that respects this will in your own bosoms ; for on that silence depend, not only my good opinion, but possibly the lives of many here---and elsewhere."

"Lives !" cried George : "Lord help---well, your honour, but don't forget I have passed my word for Sir Guise's."

There was in John's speech, or in the manner of uttering it, something so affecting to True George, that he bowed and looked, looked and bowed himself out of the room. Silent obedience, however, in servants was ever a charm in the eyes of John.

But Jane Atwood's lover did not suffer even love itself to delay carrying the bundle of papers she gave him, but still with the injunctions as to Sir Guise.

John received them graciously, and, retiring to his chamber, dropt the bolt of his door, and sat down, with a palpitating heart, to examine these eventful materials. In the heat of the perusal, the breakfast summons was rather abruptly given by Olivia's footman. "Puppy !" exclaimed John, "get down stairs. Tell them I shall not leave this room

room till dinner." Dinner-time came; and Henry himself ventured a tap at the door. "If you disturb me, Henry," quoth John, "I protest I will break in upon your muse, and frighten her away, when she is inspiring you with happy thoughts. I shall be busy all day, perhaps all night; and as to eating, I shall not starve, depend upon it. I have a room full of food, both for body and soul; so leave me to my repast, and go quietly to yours."

Henry withdrew; and, as he rejoined the family, he applied the well-known words of King Richard---

"He's not i'th' vein!"

and we must not disturb him till the fit is over.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Nothing, surely, but the designation of that Providence, which gives to its direction the form of casualty, could make the timid and apprehensive Sir Guise Stuart either

so negligent or so forgetful, as to leave the credentials of his intended fraud—for we will ease the reader so far as to tell him it had not been completely perpetrated—upon his children to the mercy of whomsoever might find them. But thus it is that the crafty is entrapped by his own snare; thus, too, is there often to be seen, even in this world, in earnest of that which is to come, a just distribution of punishments and rewards.

From the written testimonies it appeared, that Sir Marmaduke Stuart, a first cousin to Sir Guise, had made a will, though Sir Guise had given out he died intestate, in consequence of which, Sir Guise, being heir at law, took possession of his property, which, though not very considerable, was sufficient to discharge the testator's debts, and answer the several bequests, amongst which were life-annuities to the children of Sir Guise of five hundred pounds each, to be paid into a certain specified government fund one twelve-month and a day after his decease, and the interest to accumulate until the parties came of age, but both interest and principal to be delivered

delivered up at their arriving at that period. It was likewise manifest that this will had been duly executed, but the signatures were torn off; and Sir Guise made up his conscience to the enjoying the fruit of his deceit. But unluckily for the Baronet, Sir Marmaduke's solicitor, who was obliged to go suddenly and take possession of some property in the West Indies, where he afterwards established, sent over to Sir Guise a second will, the date of which revoked all others, and in this decisive one Charles and Caroline were mentioned with no less marks of distinction. Before, however, the end of the same year an account arrived from Jamaica of the attorney's death, an event which still promised secrecy to the designs of Sir Guise, who, finding his own estates begin to ebb apace, felt a strong propensity to supply them from Sir Marmaduke's reservoir. To which end he still gave out to his son and daughter, that they had not been remembered—he supposed because Sir Marmaduke knew the property would devolve to them as effectually after their tender father's death as if it had been
been

been devised. Charles and Caroline being then very young, and very generous, and, of course, very unsuspecting, rested satisfied with this account, and taking its truth for granted, never renewed, or perhaps never thought on the subject. They had never seen Sir Marmaduke, who chiefly lived abroad, and left so large a portion of his fortune to his cousin's children, merely because he did not wish to give it out of the family; and yet did not choose to bequeath it to Sir Guise, whom he never esteemed, and to whom he left only fifty pounds, with these remarkable words:—

“ I give and bequeath the sum of fifty pounds to my kinsman Sir Guise Stuart in token of my contempt.” This mark of ignominy, however, Sir Guise pocketed, as he did every other affront, even when it was not gilded like the present. Matters remained in this undivulged way, to the infinite content of Sir Guise, till he discovered that at the time the attorney sent over to him a copy of the will, the original, sent by the same conveyance, had been deposited in Doctors' Commons, but which, Sir Guise was informed, had been destroyed.

destroyed. This thundering intelligence arrived at the time of the Baronet's maturest aversion to the first Lady Stuart, and to Caroline, and when his affections to Charles were in the decline. All these were motives to run any hazards rather than make a confession of the fact to the parties concerned. But there was yet a more important inducement to hush up the business. We must make a short digression to state the nature of it.

The finances of Sir Guise had even then been some time under the pupillage of Mrs. Tempest and her paramour Miles. The Baronet's unconquerable love of the dice, and his complete ignorance with their consummate skill, gave them both the best pretence of plundering him in an honourable way. One fatal evening, therefore, when he was literally stript even from his diamond shirt-buckle to his watch, and downward to his shoe-buckles, at a *friendly* party, composed of Mrs. Tempest, Valentine Miles, a common companion of theirs, and himself, he grew frantic with his ill luck, and, execrating Fortune, resolved on complete redemption or utter ruin at a stroke.

stroke. Mrs. Tempest had, in a few hours, won several thousand pounds; Valentine no less. The friend abovementioned, whom Mrs. Tempest called cousin, had singly netted a draft for 8000*l*. Claret, Burgundy, Champagne, and last of all "imperial Tokay," had been called in to support the drooping heart, aching head, and trembling hand. The disappointed rage of Sir Guise, till it was put to flight by fear, was always phrenzy without the inflammations of the bottle; but these being adjoined, raving madness is a phrase somewhat too temperate to express the non-descript distraction of this memorable hour. He overset the dice-table, threw one of the boxes into the fire, tore and stamped upon some of the cards, gnashed others between his teeth, piled one chair upon another, slapped his forehead, and at length, being worked up to the proper ferment, he leaped upon the table, and proposed "Double or quits. Damnation! I insist on restitution or ruin!" The bet was taken, amounting to a sum of forty thousand pounds, which had been the aggregate winnings of the friendly

trio

trio during the night. The ignorance and infanity of Sir Guise had no chance with the dexterity and double dealings of three expert gamblers! He soon rose, therefore, the above sum worse for that single throw, and at one sitting became debtor to the three friends in the sum of eighty thousand pounds!

Sir Guise now declared himself a ruined man, and muttered something about packed cards and loaded dice; whereupon Valentine Mills strutted up to him, assuming the man of nice honour, and insisted on satisfaction. The bodily fear of Sir Guise always brought him to his senses, whether he was deliriously intoxicated with wine, or losses, or insults. In a tone wholly altered, he declared he had been strangely misconceived, but it was plaguy hard to have such a cursed run in one night. Mrs. Tempest said she was sure her dear Baronet meant nothing personal; the friend protested, for his part he thought people in luck ought to do an handsome thing to the losing party, swearing that he would accept only Sir Guise's note at his own time for ten thousand, and cry quits. The cue

was no sooner given, than the other performers acted their parts to perfection. Miles asseverated that he had as great a regard for Sir Guise as for any man in the world, and would let him off easily, and "I will answer for the lady's liberality." "Aye, he knows my weak part too well," sighed Mrs. Tempest. "Do what you will with me, gentlemen," answered the Baronet: "If you think fit to save me from ruin, it is more than I deserve." Thus they parted, and the next day Sir Guise being wholly out of cash, as the trio very well knew, a mortgage was given on the abbey estate for ten thousand pound to the friend, and the foundation was laid for the approbation and sale of poor Charles and Caroline's annuities to satisfy the two other moderate claims of Mrs. Tempest and her Valentine.

Versatile to the numberless meanders of the town, Mr. Miles soon adjusted the sale of the property in Mr. Dabble, the man in the world to make or mar a thousand last wills and testaments. The subsequent curious epistle which fell into John's possession will

give the reader a happy specimen of that gentleman's creative talents :

"N. D. informs V. M. that case is nice, but has got a party to do it, who, for considerations, will run all risques, and secrecy depended on—Broker of character will speak to married party, his friend; but for valuable considerations, broker sides with us: and must be let into plan—also, have drawn up sketch of the writings.—N. D. fancies if parties to consent should be wanting, they may be had on equitable terms; better if V. M. can provide them. Two adults of some sort must be forthcoming to agree, assign, &c. &c. else purchase null; but V. M. and any other of same age—spinster in preference to feme covert—will do. A fair price offered on speculation, allowing for hazards. V. M. may fix time to see the instruments at N. D.'s apartments.

"P. S. Ring at office bell.

"Minories, Sep. 11.

"N. B. Purchaser, an old dealer, and looks close. Parties to represent annuitants should be healthy constitution, price according. Af-

fidavits,

fidavits, certificates, &c. &c. ready at a moment's warning."

At the finishing of this eloquent morsel, which was amongst the papers delivered by Jane Atwood, John worked the letter into a twist in his clenched hand, precisely as he would have twisted the neck of the writer had he been present; and then, personifying the innocent paper, bestowed upon it all those opprobrious names which were due to Mr. Nicholas Dabble, but of which the said paper was to the full as sensible in point of conscience as the aforesaid Nicholas, who had lived in the city of London a practising doer of all dirty works eight and thirty-years, without once committing an action, even by mistake, which did not deserve the halter. He had been the bosom friend of Mr. Miles and Mrs. Tempest half their lives, during which time he had got both of them out of as many hang-worthy escapes as he had got every person they connected with into them. And, indeed, few Judges had ordered more guilty persons from the prison to the gallows than Nicholas had prepared innocent ones for both.

both. But, as Mr. Dabble will turn out by no means like one of those heroes who "strut their hour upon the stage, and then are heard no more," we will reserve what may further be proper to say of him to his second appearance, convinced that his first has fixed an impression of his character in the mind of the reader not speedily to be effaced.

John soon recollecting himself, deemed the epistolary philippic of this prostitute of the law of too high value to destroy, and therefore rescued it, almost griped asunder, to as nearly its pristine state as he could, in the consolatory hope, that, like the handwriting on the wall, it might, one day, be given in evidence against the author.

Meanwhile, he carefully folded it up, and having sat a full hour in the profound thought that usually preceded his deeds of moment, he rose from his chair indignant and determined. His plan was mature, and he lost not an instant in its execution.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

By a perseverance which uneasiness of mind rather rendered more intense than obstructed, John had by this time secured his seat in parliament, where the independent display of his talents and principles had gained him the respect of all parties; as his attention to military duty, at home and abroad, had rendered him honourable in the opinion of friends and enemies: but, in the intervals of peace, it was always a lucky circumstance to favour any of John's secret manœuvres, or in retreating from any chagrin or bosom service at the castle, to gain the regiment; and whenever the colonel, the colonel's horse, or groom were not to be found, which was often the case, it was concluded he was gone to quarters: And when his own servant was indisposed, he would, without ceremony, borrow True George from Henry, for an hour, a day, or a week. For instance, the colonel's servants being otherwise employed,

or thought less proper for the business, George was now ordered to have horses saddled at five the next morning. The colonel only saying to him over-night, "You must leave your master, aye, and your mistress too, George, to accompany me at five to-morrow, on the matter we spoke about in the summer-house." George bounded, rather than ran, out of the room, and on that occasion would have left even the arms of his Jane, had they been enfolding him in the bridal hour,

"Punctual as lovers to the moment sworn."

therefore John Fitzorton and True George kept their assignation in the stable. The morning was heavy with clouds, which, as the colonel mounted his steed, broke in deluges of rain: Neither of our heroes appeared at all disposed to advert to the circumstance, nor indeed to be sensible of it. The 'tempest in their minds,' as the great dramatic delineator says, 'took from them all feeling else.' They had cleared the park, and got about a mile on the road, when George recollected that
the

the Colonel's great coat was belted to his back; and the Colonel, so far from feeling the want of it, was jogging on at a gentle trot, with his eyes fixed on the pommel of the saddle, as if he were counting the drops that fell from the spout of his hat, which, having the cock military, filled like a reservoir, and, from the downward bend of his head, flowed like a fountain.

George, however, having unbuckled the great coat, rode up to the side of John Fitz-orton, but seeing his position, (for George critically understood all the family attitudes,) he feared to interrupt his mind by an unseasonable care of his body, which, he knew, was always secondary in Colonel Sir John's cogibundusses. After due deliberation, therefore, what, in so difficult a case, was proper to be done, he passed by John a few paces, holding the great coat at arm's length, so that it might strike in the most favourable point of view, and thereby recommend itself; but this not succeeding, and the shower not only increasing, but driving with the wind full in their faces, George drew in his own steed, and gently

threw the coat on John's shoulders. This arousing the latter, who had been all that time making Sir Guise, his new married lady, her gallant Mr. Miles, their agent Mr. Nick Dabble, and even the purchaser of annuities, dance the tight rope from one scaffold, had the desired effect; the colonel, throwing the bridle on his horse's neck, took up the great coat, and put it on slightly, saying to George, who stood at the horse's head, "And I advise you to follow the example;" which the obedient George would certainly have taken even had the dogstar raged—so implicit was he as to the word of command—but for a trifling impediment—that is to say, he had no great coat to put on; for when he unbuckled John's, he forgot to save his own, which, therefore, dropt for the use of the next traveller who might wish for such a convenience. Upon this discovery, however, George contented his honest heart with gently condemning and striking his own head, kept his station behind, and only said to himself, 'What a silly Simon! 'tis well it was not Mr. Sir John's, though.'

The Colonel pushed on, much increasing his pace—not because the morning continued showery, but because he had, perhaps, satisfied his imagination with seeing the parties swing their hour in his fancy, and he seemed riding-post to take the news to his friends. The Colonel and his attendant had travelled upwards of twenty-four miles ere George had hazarded a conjecture where they might be going, for John had not said a syllable as to that particular, nor, indeed, would George have made an inquiry had he been journeying to the world's end; but that feeling a misgiving they were wrong, he supposed matters had better be set right; he conceived John was at least two-and-twenty miles out of the road. He was therefore on the very rim of a question, the rarest of all things with George, when John, pulling in his steed, signified his intention to stop at the next market-town, and if the weather did not clear, go post the rest of the way, “for,” added he, “I am, as I suppose you may guess, going to Mr. Partington’s.”—“Bless us! your honour,”

honour," replied George, "I wish I had known that before, because I could have gone several miles nearer across the country. We should have left the London road, which your honour knows we are still upon, at the two mile-stone, and gone over the heaths." "And pray how happens it thou art so well acquainted with this road?" interrogated John, "'tis quite out of Henry's beat, prosaic or poetical, and Partington is but recently settled in these parts."—"Your honour knows I have been backwards and forwards on one business or t'other ever since—"—"Ever since—Jenny Atwood's father, I suppose, was put by Partington into a farm in his neighbourhood. Hey George? What, you went for his vote and interest I suppose?" George blushed, and took in a copious mouthful of rain; he then said, "We must now go right an end, please your honour, then take the road slip-side of the town, which will bring us to—to the farmer's, your honour." While George was accurately describing the geography of the road to Partington's, a man on horseback rode by at a full trot, when George immediately exclaimed—

exclaimed—"Your honour, there's my great coat! if your honour will give me leave, I'll have it off that fellow's back in *a jiffy*."—

John assenting to this, the dripping George galloped after the man, who, believing himself pursued, and whose horse having the speed of George's, would, perhaps, have escaped with the furtout after all, had not some little altercation at the turnpike taken place, and occasioned a delay which brought the pursuer near enough to catch the arm of the man pursued, and to say—"This is mine, Sir; I'll make affidavit of it before a justice of peace; and there's one just behind, who is a squire, and a barrow night, and a colonel, and a parliament-man, at the same time, and who knows the coat as well as I do." The word justice, sounded more ominously in the ears of the party accused than all the other titles of his worship, had they out-pedigreed Cadwallader; he therefore owned the fact, saying, "Though I found it in the king's highway, friend, and could, therefore, keep it by law, I will surrender it, if the pikeman will open the gate and let me through, as I am

in a very great hurry." This haste produced a suspicion in the mind of the toll-receiver, who swore he would detain him as a thief on his own confession, the goods being found upon him. "And as to your finding a good great coat on the road such a morning as this," said the man, sneeringly, "'tis a likely story, indeed! seeing that there is not such a ninny in the world to throw away the best friend to a man's back in such a ducibus of a day as here is!" For the proof of which assertion he appealed to George himself, putting it to *him*, whether such a nincompoop ignoramus was ever known in King George's dominions! He then added, "I suppose, young man, this fellow has robbed both you and your master."

"I believe," said George, "he *might* find it, for I was fool enough to let it drop; but still it is my coat, and I must have it." All this time the stranger resisted, for fear of some worse discovery; and while he was labouring to muffle up ~~his~~ his face in the said coat, which had now become necessary as a disguise, George laboured to uncase him, assisted by the tollman, and indeed by his

his wife, who now came forth from the turnpike-house, half undressed, to see what was the matter. These contentions gave John time to come up, and he gained the scene of action just as the victorious George had unhooded his antagonist—a victory, which unfolded to the view of the company the illustrious Mr. David Otley, late, as the reader remembers, a faithful domestic in the Clare, and now a no less worthy confidant in the Stuart family. At the sight of John Fitzorton, his usual presence of mind, which in a case of stratagem was scarcely inferior to that of the Swedish monarch, wholly forsook him, and he fell upon his knees, assuring every one present, that—though he knew he was a very infamous rascal, greater rascals than he had made him so; and particularly the love of gold, the root of all evil, and which he verily thought was the greatest rascal-maker in the world, and would, sooner or later, bring him and a number of his friends to the gallows. "I tell you indeed, your honour, my conscience has at last done what I thought would never come to pass, worked a miracle upon me, for I am

now running away from the abbey, and going to London to repent."

John could scarcely help unbending his muscles, braced up as they had long been to thoughts of vengeance; and, indeed, he almost smiled at the place which Otley had chosen for the scene of his reformation. However, commanding George to take his property, the youth had no sooner obeyed, than feeling something hard and heavy in the pockets, he took out from thence a brace of pistols, which in an instant George discovered to be loaded.

"As *our* pistols, your honour, are in their cases on the saddles, these cannot be they," said George, significantly.

"And are these the books, sirrah, from which you study the art of penitence?" questioned the Colonel, sternly. "Tie him on the horse, George, and bring him away."

Jane's lover performed this with surprising agility. He belted him with the strap which had before bound the very great coat thence to his discovery, then threw him on his back over the horse's shoulders, and, getting up before

before him, trotted off with him calf-fashion, with as much ease as if he had been carrying his master's portmanteau.

The turnpike-man, who was an arch fellow, and a great lover of seeing thieves taken, tried, and executed, begged a holiday of his wife.—“Now do oblige me, my dear love, by letting one of your pretty eyes look to the gate, and your two pretty hands take the toll, just while I see this gentleman limbo'd. 'Tis for the good of my country to lend a lift to hang off its rogues; and next to you I love my country, you know.”——The wife, pleased with the wording of her husband's petition, charitably and lovingly replied, “Well—but mind you bring me back news the fellow is to be hanged at our next sifes, because then I shall have a gossiping as well as you, and limping Beck will see to the gate; and I *know*, husband, that is a villain, because the young man says he went from 'Squire Clare's family to that of sir Guise. We know old devil-come Guise of old.”

Thus authorised, the turnpike-man, jumping up behind George, reached his colonel

and the town, which was but a short mile from the turnpike, at the same time. They stopt at the sign which bore the name of George, with the addition of Saint, for the prowess of conquering the dragon; but perhaps the reader will presently be of opinion, as great honours ought to be adjudged to our modern George for his achievements in bringing to condign punishment an animal more baneful to society than the dragon which fable asserts, or all the actual wild beasts of the earth; for what troop of them can cause half the mischief that has often been produced by one dishonest man?

The culprit being unbound, to observe which a greater concourse of spectators had gathered, than suited the colonel's purpose, he took in his hand Otley's pistols, and went with him into a room, and sat on him in his judicial capacity, as successor, by right of eldership, as well as nomination in the commission of the peace. Assuming, therefore, his terrible graces, he told David, in a very succinct manner, that he was apprised of enough of *his* villany, as well as that of his employers,
to

to hang the whole gang. "But as you know me, Otley," said John, "few words are necessary; answer, then, the questions I shall put to you;—first, whither are you going?"—"To London, sir, as I hope to be spared," answered the trembler.—"To London! for what?"—"To—to—to—"—"Have a care! if your affectation of penitence was not in itself an ample ground of my suspicion, the thorough knowledge of you and your associates warrants my insisting upon—." "Sir, your honour, I see, knows me as well as I know myself," interrupted the quivering wretch; "I am only going, sir—am going, a going—I am going, an't please your honour—I am only going—" "Where, rascal?"—"To town, on a little business to Sir Guise and Mr. Miles's attorney, sir."—"His attorney!" exclaimed John, staring wildly. "What is that attorney's name, firrah?"—"His name, an't please your honour—his name is—that is to say the name he does business in, is—is—" "Is what, abominable caitiff," questioned the terrible John, losing all temper. "The name he does *some* of his

his businessses in, please your hon—hon—hon—hon—our,” replied Otley, cutting the word exactly in twain between his chattering teeth, “is N. D. which means Nic Dabble, please your honour; but his real name, I have heard say, is—” —“Perdition on his real name, that in which he cheats heirs at law out of their estates, is sufficient for me;—the alias’s under which he will be hanged are immaterial,” said John—“Oh Lord! Lord! your honour! save me, I am but a servant; a second-handed little personage, as it were, and obliged to do as I am bid. But I see your honour knows all; yes, I see I shall suffer yet. I told myself so years ago! both at the manor-house and castle. David, (said I,) depend upon it, my friend, the abbey will, sooner or later, take you to Tyburn.”

“The abbey, for once, told truth,” said John.

Here David dropped on his knees imploring mercy, and protesting he would from that moment be an honest man, and give instant proof of it, by ’peaching his master, mistress, and Miles, and the lawyer, and his clerk; and,
in

in short, bring all their necks into the noose, if his worship would but promise to let his own slip out of it.

John, instead of making any promise, held one of the pistols to each ear of the miserable petitioner, till he confessed that he was going to Mr. Dabble's chambers to meet the family.

"What family?" interposed John.

"Sir Guise, and the new Lady Stuart, and Mr. Miles, your honour, will be there presently, having set off before day-light from the abbey; only they come into the open road by back ways, and are going to settle some little affair with a gentleman who lives in this very place, and then for London, to Mr. Dabble's, and—and there has been a—a—a—a—"

"WHAT?" said John, in thundering accents. "A little bit of a *rumbustion* at the abbey, and Mr. Dabble is to commodate.—He's a vast commodater, your worship—and I am a party—something about a little bit of an affair of honour between Mr. Miles and my lady.—And this—this—is the whole truth,

truth, as we are all wicked sinners, an please your worshipful, merciful honour."

What further questions John would have put to the captive is uncertain; for True George tapped at the door of the chamber of examination, and, speaking through the key-hole, said, "the mob was so great, they would not leave the inn-yard till they knew what was to be done with the rogue." John, by the same mode of communication, desired them to be told, that the man had given satisfactory answers to all his questions; and that, as the great coat had been actually found, and restored, the prisoner must be acquitted, in case he cleared up some other points, for which he must proceed with him to London. The multitude, though they appeared much discontented with these tidings, dispersed, lest they themselves should become responsible to justice. The turnpike-man, in particular, was mortified, and began to fear it was decreed for him to return home to his wife without his welcome, having pledged himself, at parting, to bring the good news she expected, as to the thief's being committed to prison,

prison, and in a fair way of the gallows. And, indeed, several of the mob now shifted their censure from the thief to the justice, whom, in a general muttering, they accused of undue severity, in taking a poor honest man up, and packing him upon a horse, as if he was a beast. Nay, one of the bye-standers observed, "that justices of the peace ought to be *sure* what they are about, before they go such lengths; otherwise, nobody is safe," said he, addressing those nearest to him; "and you or I may be clapt into prison when we are as innocent as the child unborn; and as to the coat's being dropt—I don't doubt but that was designed as a trick upon travellers, all done for the purpose. I have been in the law myself, and wish every gentleman of the faculty"—"You mean, of the profession, perhaps," said his next-hand neighbour. "Well," resumed the other, "it is the same thing, faculty or profession, in the Greek; and I say again, what I meant to say before—I wish all gentlemen were of my opinion; then somebody would be ducked, or so, for trying to *make* rogues of honest men—justice or no justice."

justice." George, who, though in regard to his own interests, he was the most peaceable young fellow in the world, had a spirit of vindictive fire that mounted into flame the moment any of his master's friends or favourites were accused. Having heard, therefore, these reflections on justice, he caught hold of the professional gentleman of the faculty, swearing, that his master was the best justice in all the country, as well as one of the best men in all the world; and if every man had his deserts, he did not doubt but the rascal that dared to say any thing to the contrary ought to swing under the gallows. "My master's name, the justice of peace now in that room," cried George aloud, and with triumph, "is Colonel Mr. Sir John Fitzorton, who is the son of Sir Armine Fitzorton; and shall such a fellow as this here, that I am shaking by the collar, and who, I dare say, is no more a lawyer than I am—shall the son, I say, of Sir Armine"—several of the populace, to whom the name of Sir Armine was not only known, but held in reverence, would not permit George to finish what he intended to say; but, levelling their
resent-

resentment at its proper mark, they took the accuser of justice from the grasp of George into their own hands, and were proceeding with him to a copious pond at the bottom of the inn back-yard, when a female voice exclaimed, "Stop, stop thief!—there's my handkerchief sticking out of the corner of that man's pocket—give it me, gentlemen—I'll swear to my property!" This exclamation produced a search; the consequence of which was, a redemption, not only of the handkerchief in question, but of several others, all of which were owned by different claimants; amongst whom was George himself, who said he would swear to a silk India handkerchief which the thief had thrust into his bosom. "'Tis marked in the corner," exclaimed George, vehemently, "with J. A. and I would not take all the handkerchiefs that ever was born for it." Indeed, it was that which Jane Atwood had, with her own fair hand, tied round his neck the very morning before he set out on the present expedition: in our haste to prepare for which, we forgot to tell the reader, this affectionate girl

girl had risen, notwithstanding the unseasonableness of the hour, to make George, for whom her regard grew apace, a comforting dish of tea, before he went into the cold air.

The worthy gentleman, whose morality, touching the subject of justice, had been so violent, turned out a pickpocket, and, as the reader will perhaps, hereafter, be of opinion, something worse. Thus there was fresh business for Justice John, before whom, instead of the horsepond, it was thought expedient to secure the arraigner of rash justices of the peace, with all his credentials of moral sentiment about him, save and except that precious mark of Jane's attachment, which George declared he would shew to the justice *himself*; but that he would not let it be polluted by touching such a fellow's neck.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE clamour in the yard had induced John to open the door, first commanding the still-trembling Otley, on pain of death, neither

to speak or stir. In less than two minutes the room of justice was filled with people of all descriptions.

The two prisoners, that is to say, Mr. David Otley and the pickpocket moralist, no sooner saw each other, than, in despite of the penitence of the one, and the morality of the other, an involuntary recognition took place, in a very curious way—to wit, in a determination not to own each other; but the struggle, on either side, to effect the concealment, produced the discovery: a discovery, dear reader, of their being not only brothers in iniquity, according to the vulgar but expressive phrase, but brothers in blood. It is a nice point in feeling, and certainly a desperate case in politics, when two such personages are, by a sudden and unthought-of rencontre, so thoroughly ashamed of their relationship, that each deeming the other the greater scoundrel, both resolve on disavowal. Nature, however, sometimes seizes upon men unawares, to the total overthrow of their best-concerted designs.

Now

Now the discovery of brotherhood in the case of the Otleys, was a stroke of that absolute nature treated of by John himself in one of the Fitzorton conversations, and of Nature too, in one of her most determined moments to prove nearness of kin. After John had heard the depositions of several of the witnesses, with George's account of the theft of Jane Atwood's handkerchief, about which George still stormed like another Othello, the justice was struck with something very particular in the behaviour of his two criminals, who, happening to stand parallel to each other, were biting their lips, gnashing their teeth, and making many other grimaces, which they supposed were not noticed; for, hitherto, the noise and confusion of relating the thefts, and of asserting claim to the several properties, were favourable to such deportment. At length, being "perplexed in the extreme," by this demonstration of vengeance in dumb shew, the moralist, exasperated, probably by some gesture in the penitent too provoking to be borne, broke through the laws of pantomime, by exclaiming—"What, brother Davy!

Davy! you scoundrel, are you unhanged yet?" Yes, brother Gam," answered the penitent, with an overflow of malicious spleen, that forgot all consequences—"Yes, brother Gam, you villain, I know my duty, and staid on purpose to see my elder brother swing first."

"Scoundrels!" interposed John; "I make no doubt, however, the precedence may be adjusted, but you will both die the same honourable death; my business at present is to direct you the nearest way to the accomplishment of your fraternal wishes---for which purpose---"

While John was speaking, a noise was heard at the door, of "Make way, make way for Justice Barhim," and in the next minute the said justice, and his attendant, having by dint of fist and elbows made an avenue through the spectators, his egregious worship appeared in view, discovering thus his great abilities and good manners: "Mr. Thingum—Thangum—" said he, addressing himself to John Fitzorton—"I understand you have taken upon you to examine, to harbour, and detain in

in durance, my thief, thieves, or what not—the which is neither law, nor gospel, nor like one gentleman to another; thief taken on my jurisdiction, is as much my thief, as game taken on my manor is my game. Perhaps, Mr. Thingum, you don't know any more who I am than I know or cares who be you; but I must tell you, if you be a justice, this here township has rights; and I, thereby, take up, whip, stock, pound, pillar, cage, bind over, or bind down, or what not, in my own right, so that whoever takes up, whips, stocks, pounds, pillars, cages, &c. &c. in my bounds, commits a trespass on my rights, and is thereby guilty of a breach, and an action will stand, go, and lie, against him. You will do well, therefore, to surrender my thief, thieves, or what not, and look after your own, for there's enow in reason in every man's parish, if a gentleman will look after 'um; therefore—which are the prisoners? what are their offences? and where be they going?"

He now vaulted into the seat of justice, squatting down on a chair by the side of justice John, when there past a scene of dumb eloquence

eloquence betwixt John Fitzorton and his brother of the quorum, not inferior to that which had been acted by the moralist and penitent; for notwithstanding his pretended ignorance, as to personal identity, the obtruding magistrate as thoroughly knew John, as John knew him, and they bore to each other an *aversion* not less inveterate than that born by the brother prisoners, though very different in kind; for John Fitzorton despised Mr. Barhim, because he considered him abundantly more mischievous than either of the scoundrels in custody; and Barhim hated John, because he was conscious the said contempt was founded on such knowledge; in short, the antipathy on either side was no more than that which an honest man feels towards a rogue, and a rogue towards an honest man.

The mob had now fresh objects of surprise and curiosity before them; John Fitzorton declared he by no means wished to dispute with Barhim his natural or inherent right to any or to all the vagabonds and villains of the land, inasmuch as he believed no man had

so just a claim on the villain who had a fellow feeling in the villainy; and that so far from disputing pretensions with Mr. Barhim to a property in the prisoners now before him, that he thought it a pity two jails should part them; for which reason, unless a certain misdemeanor be atoned for, committed some years since by the said Barhim on the person of the late Sir Armine Fitzorton—"my father, Sir," said John, exalting his voice, "I shall include three of the greatest scoundrels that ever came before a magistrate to the same place of confinement."

Before the great man accused had opportunity to make any reply to this insinuation, which, indeed, it is more than probable he would not have attempted, for it had a visible effect upon him, a chariot and four, followed by two servants, drove into the inn-yard, and the words—"This way, my lady, this way, an't please your Ladyship—the justices and a couple of thieves are in the Angel—hope your ladyship and his honour, therefore, will put up with the Devil for a moment till they are gone."—"Thieves," exclaimed the

the lady, "I am glad they are taken; we might have been robbed perhaps."—"I hate pettyfogging, way-laying thieves of all things; I have a great fancy to see the fellows," observed one of the two gentlemen who came out of the coach; "and so have I," said the other. "Let us go into the room then," said the lady: "but pray," added she, "has not some gentleman been here to ask for—though of course *he* is one of the justices, so lead on to the thieves."

The reader who has been, in some sort, prepared for the company of Sir Guise, Lady Tempest Stuart, and Mr. Valentine, by their courier, Mr. David Otley the penitent, will not be surprised by any means in the degree that the said good company were, when, on entering the apartment of equity, they beheld their own confidential servant in one of the prisoners—his brother, who had been of no less use in their affairs, in the other, and the two magistrates—equally known to them—John Fitzorton, the avowed and indignant enemy of their vices, and Mr. Barhim, as their mercenary and time-serving friend.

But great as was the mystery and amazement in which the miscellaneous groupe now gathered together in the room of justice were involved, destiny, fortune, or some superior power that controls these, had pre-ordained to thicken the plot, by making it impossible for any of the parties to go into explanation; and though the reader should wonder "how the devil the said parties came there," we are ourselves at this moment so full of business, that he must wait for elucidation to a more convenient season.

Another arrival this instant demands our attention, even as it did, at the time it happened, that of the landlord and landlady of the inn, and every servant who had, from time to time, run to the door of the Angel, then taken a mouthful of justice between one summons and another; crying, "coming, coming, Gemmin," as the different bells rang, then from the Angel to the Devil, from the Star to the Bear, and from the Red Lion to the Fox. The rumble of a stage-coach was succeeded by the rattle of two post-chaises following it; and, by a miserable jealousy which

which the gentlemen of the whip almost universally feel to drive furiously through a market town; or, if their passengers stop at any inn in the said town, a no less absurd vanity of turning into the yard with velocity and dispatch, animated both the postillions with two sublime determinations—the one to pass the stage coach, and then to contend between themselves which should take the lead into the George yard:

The stage coachman, however, happened to have as great a thirst for glory as the postillions, and giving his horses the encouraging word and the commanding whip, had almost gained the entrance, when the postillions taking each a side, made a vigorous push which carried them all three into the mouth of the gateway at the same moment, by which manœuvre all the wheels were locked together, and the axle-trees of the carriage so wedged that they could have but one movement, even as if they had been one body. Seeing which, the high blooded drivers, by this time, like all great souls, in the heat of action, superior to consequences,

plied the lash when they ought to have pulled the reins, and by driving forward when they should have backed, the heavier body, namely the stage coach, disengaged itself from the lighter one, and carrying all, before it worked its victorious way into the yard, where it broke down with one grand jump upon the stones, almost shivering its two petty rivals in its fall!

The scream of the passengers, who were tossed or tumbled out in heaps from all the vehicles, were drowned in the louder cries of the spectators within and without the gateway; but even these ejaculations were lost in the dissonant tones and trembling oaths of the stage coachman and the two postillions, who with no less than four men, who were jerked from the top of the coach, and as many of the inside passengers as could recover their fall and consternation, were all in arms at one and the same moment. The justice room was emptied even faster than it had filled, and the inhabitants of the Angel would have run to the Devil, had not one of the combatants, who appeared, by a handful
of

of hair which he held in triumph, to have been the most active in the affray, cried out, in as loud a voice as a mouth filling with the blood of his own nose would permit—"Stop, stop thief—stop the worthy gentleman to whom this head of hair belongs." Without uttering more, the exclaimer darted amongst the croud in search of the fugitive. Alarmed at this, John Fitzorton and True George, supposing the thief who had stolen away was one of their own prisoners, looked about and saw both of them secured, the one in the custody of a stout young man, which happened to be Jonathan Armstrong, Jane Atwood's cousin, the other in that of as sturdy a young and as hearty an old one, being no other than the two Atwoods, father and son. The colonel's aim, therefore, was to recover his brother justice, who, taking advantage of the new disturbances, had discreetly withdrawn himself, as did Messrs. Miles, Sir Guise, and his amiable spouse, but, by the vigilance of George, they were recovered, and will be forthcoming when their re-appearance may be necessary.

Still raged the battle in the Inn yard with unabated fury, and in less than half an hour, such a collection of the halt and blind, of bruised and bloodied, of teeth displaced, heads broken, women crying, children bawling, and men swearing, were surely never before brought together out of an hospital, or indeed out of Bedlam. The two postillions lay to all appearance defunct upon the pavement, a pair of as miserable carcases as ever were dragged at the chariot wheels of any of the stage coachmen of former times, when heroes, gods, and goddeses delighted to tear their mortal victims with immortal rage, limb from limb, and indeed sometimes to tear themselves. The coachman himself was a man of rags, every passenger having had a pull at him for obtaining a victory too dear, even at the expense of many wounds and much bloodshed.

Amongst the female sufferers also, all the hysterical restoratives, and pocket medicines were at work. My landlord was holding hartshorn to the nose of one lady, my landlady chaffing the temples of another, the

the chamber-maids and waiters were running against each other, and an apothecary was applying salts, opodildoc, brown paper plaisters steeped in thieves' vinegar, volatile lineaments, &c. &c. while another party comforted themselves with ample doses of cherry-bounce, unsophisticated brandy, or honest hollands.

Meantime, the gentleman who had, in the first instance, given the alarm, as to the escape of a thief, returned, conducting that personage by the collar, declaring, as he held the honours of his head in his hand, "that he was sure of his man, for that what he had borrowed from the scalp would fit it to an *hair*. Come, gentlemen," said the hero to his three attendants, who were at the heels of the prisoner, "help to escort him into a place of safety." They accordingly took him into the room, which the baronet and his lady and her friend had vacated; the attendants followed; and as the gentleman was himself about to enter, True George plucked him gently by the coat, saying, "Bless me, Squire Partington! is it you! as I live, Sir,

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here's

here's my master's parliament brother Mr.—Sir John the colonel—and we have had such a to do—but Mr.—Sir John will be so glad to see you, Sir, for he was going to your honour's house, only he was stopt on the way by a thief or two.

Partington immediately conferred on George, who was a singular favourite, the high and distinguished mark of his most coarse abuse, and exclaimed in high spirits, “Why then all the rascals are got together! for look you, there are the two Atwoods coming, with, as I suppose, *your* friends, for *mine* is gone into this room, with three as honest personages as himself.”

At the name of the two Atwoods, George, seeing John coming up to Partington, left them together, to enter into further explanations, and running to his Jane's father and brother, who had the Otleys still in their gripe, he gave them a hearty welcome, and had their hands been at liberty, would have demonstrated his sincerity by the usual token. But scarce a moment's opportunity was given for caress or conversation, as Partington beckoned

beckoned the Atwoods to advance with their prisoners; and as they passed him, Partington bowed very respectfully, telling them, as he thrust them into the room, where his own party were inclosed, "that they would there probably meet with an old acquaintance."

He now locked the door, put the key into his pocket, and clapping his own cudgel into George's hand, saying, "You must stand centinel here, you scoundrel, as you did at the inn at Adsell." He then gave his arm to John, and desiring the Atwoods to follow, they shut themselves into the apartment, which had been before, and as the reader will presently find was still decreed, by the powers that ruled on this eventful day, to be the room of justice. It may not, meantime, be improper to observe, that True George, previously to these arrangements, had dispatched the turnpike man to the place where the angry justice and his friends had betaken themselves, with a strict charge to have an eye on all their motions, and that they might not steal out of town before they had Mr.—Sir John's sanction so to do. George had, in the bustle of

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affairs,

affairs, taken care to order the landlord of the inn, the only one where post-chaises were to be had, not to put horses to the carriage of Sir Guise, or any other, without giving him the said George notice. The turnpike man was too well pleased to find the mischiefs in which he so much delighted, multiply upon him—and to think that he should not go home with an empty budget—not to execute the commands of George on this occasion with as much vigilance as if his own property and life were at stake.—So indefatigable are some men in the business of others, and so officiously do they engage in punishing the follies and vices of their neighbours to the utter oblivion of their own!

And now, reader, having cleared the obstructed path, which literally blocked up every loop-hole to explanation; having taken two thieves into custody, who little expected to find a brother in that spot; having conveyed, to the same scene, Sir Guise and Lady Stuart, and Valentine Miles, in a coach and four; presented to your view two of his majesty's justices of the peace, and set them together
almost

almost by the ears; having also, unexpectedly, produced your old friend Partington, two of the Atwoods, three thief-takers in their train, and the thief himself; having, likewise, rescued George's coat and Jenny's handkerchief; and, lastly, brought into the yard of this ever-memorable inn three carriages at once, broken them almost to pieces, to stand for future ages amongst the ruins of ambition; maimed and mended the passengers, clapped our honest men into the Angel, and sent our rogues to the Devil, we will leave them awhile to hold discourse on the subject of those very surprises of which we will unfold the causes; and, in good truth, we must say it is high time that this were done, and yet thou wilt have the candour to allow it could not have been done sooner.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

It will scarce be necessary to refresh the memory in any thing that compounds the singular

gular but veritable character of Partington *, who, under the most unornamented leaf, concealed the fairest fruit, and within the roughest husk shut up the richest kernel. In short, he was, like John Fitzorton, earnest and indefatigable in searching out misery and misfortune, of every size and of every sort, purely for the satisfaction of relieving it; and like John also, though utterly different in the means of effecting the same ends, he was no less persevering in his researches after fraud and villainy, for the gratification of exposing it to scorn and infamy. His hale constitution, lofty courage, and ample fortune, were all knit together to produce these effects. The means, indeed, were, as just observed, not only dissimilar to his friend, the Colonel's, but such as scarcely any other man would think of using, but in the way of counteraction and contrariety; yet, never did a human being more infinitely love an honest, nor more abundantly

* The author might have added the word *existing*; for the original of this copy still lives, to the delight of his friends.

hate a dishonest man—never would human being go farther, or try harder, to save the one, and hang the other.

The moment that he returned from taking an eternal leave of his inestimable friend Sir Armine, which was not till almost the expiring hour, he hurried to his house in London, and after bringing the whole of Sir Guise Stuart's character into a point, he concluded it would be a meritorious thing, as well to the family in particular, as to human society in general, to bring the noble Baronet to the gallows!

“The focus of that honest gentleman,” said he, “presents to my view halters by the thousand; now, the summit of my ambition would be to twist them all together with my own hand, and tie them about his neck; for I can assert with the Moor—

“My great revenge has stomach for them all.”

But as this supreme happiness is denied me, he must, I fancy, be put out of the world the ordinary way, and with that, I must try to be content,

content. I must learn some of my friend John's philosophy."

While he was in the spirit of this soliloquy, which he pronounced on his arrival from London—even as he was just setting down to a dish of tea after his journey—the two Atwoods, and their kinsman Jonathan Armstrong, whom he had situated in the comfortable and independant way the reader has been informed of, came running in to know whether their patron had returned, and, to their infinite satisfaction, hearing that he had just drawn off his boots, they followed the agitated feelings which impelled them, and rushed, without asking the usual questions, into his presence. "Tell me, you dear, good-for-nothing scoundrels; tell me," said Partington, the instant they entered—pushing them down by their shoulders till they were seated in chairs—"which of you has gratitude and religion enough in your hearts to assist a scoundrel like yourselves, even my magnanimous self, in a plan that I am forming to hang an honest man? But, before you determine,

mine, remember that you owe something to Providence, and that one good turn deserves another."

"As *your* honest man, please your honour, I have observed, is always a rogue," replied Atwood the father, trying to conceal his disturbance of mind, "I think I may safely promise you my poor efforts, and I fancy I can answer for those of my boy and his coz." Young Atwood fervently, but rather more fuddled than affrighted, declared, he would knock all the honest men in the kingdom on the head, and no questions asked, which his honour should think ought to be put to death. "But as to that," added the high-mettled youth, with increased impetuosity, "father and I are come to wait on your honour about, as I take it, another hanging or knocking down matter: whether the party be over-honest your honour will be the best judge when you have heard the story."

"Tell it, you insufferable caitiff!" exclaimed Partington.

"Why, then, there is a good-for-nothing rogue of a lawyer, an't please your honour," said young Atwood.

"Out

“ Out upon you !” vociferated Partington.
“ What’s that you say, firrah ?”

“ I ask your honour’s pardon,” replied the youth, very gravely correcting his mistake, “ under favour, there is one of your honour’s honestest men, by trade a lawyer, who has sent two ill-looking fellows into our farm, swearing we owe him above two hundred pounds, though we never clapped eyes on him before ; and then they tossed about our things, and rummaged our boxes and drawers, and almost frightened poor mother out of her wits ; whereupon I thought, your honour, it was time for me to begin—especially as they got father by the collar, and mother set up a roar, and there was no time to run for neighbours, and your honour’s justiceship was, as I thought, from home ; so with that, cousin Jonathan here and I, made bold to trip up one of the law-men’s heels, and knock down t’other smack, your honour, with back-handed stroke, this fashion. So we down’d with ’em both ; then, wi’ a couple of halters cousin Jonathan, who was with us at farm, had bought at market i’ th’ morning”—“ Yes, I had been to market, and got rather mellow,
your

your honour," said Jonathan, "and was in order, as I may say, for any thing; and cousin Jerom is in the same way; so I tied un till they squeak'd, and then rowl'd un into back-house, slip side kitchen, and icod, there they be now, your honour; and they took it as kindly, as thof they had been us'd to it, only one o'um gave a bit of a growle, and said summut about *Sir Guise Stuart* should pay for his bloody nose yet!—sure enough his nose spouted finely—so thought I, as sure as a gun, that son of a—gentleman, *Sir Guise*, is at the bottom of all this: but I did not stay to ax questions, thinking to get neighbours, and your honour's servants—glad enough are we your honour's come home yourself, just in the nick."

"Fine fellows!" in a kind of gulp, and giving a sort of hysterical catch at the name of *Sir Guise Stuart*; "Fine fellows!" said Par-
tington; then doubling his fist at young At-
wood and Armstrong, swore the scoundrel,
meaning Atwood, should die upon the spot,
if he stopt to breathe till he had given his old
rascal of a father a bumper of brandy, and
taken

taken another himself; and made Jonathan then swallow a third.

This command the son obeyed with great dispatch and dexterity, declaring, when he had swallowed one half of his allowance, he should now be a match for all the rogues. "I beg pardon, your honour, I mean, for all the honest gentlemen who take a fancy to come into other people's houses in Christendom. O! but I should have told your honour," said Jonathan, "one of these genusses, when he first came in, just as uncle, aunt, and cousin, were keeping out the cold of this biting night from our stomachs, and drinking to your honour's health—which we do every night, as sure as the night comes, after supper"—"And as I do now, God bless your honour, in the rest of this brandy," interposed Jerom, taking up the story—"one of the genusses said, 'We had better let'um do things quietly, and let'um take account of goods and chattels, as we could not pay money: for that lawyer himself would be down shortly, and then, said he, You'll all go to pot.'"

At the close of this narrative, Partington snapped his fingers, rubbed his hands, and
danced

danced about the room, as if he had been hearing the extrication, instead of the involvement of the family in question. "Charming! noble! exhilarating! delightful! and triumphant!" exclaimed Partington, putting on his gloves and great coat, and taking his hat, and grasping the cudgel which we have celebrated in this history, and then leaping by bounds, rather than long steps, out of the house, the elder Atwood in one arm, and ordering Jonathan and Jerom to follow, but never slackening his pace till he gained Atwood's farm, nor aught abating his demonstrations of joy in his way thither, exclaiming, however, almost at every stride, "It shall be—it must be—it can be no other than Sir Guise, who set this amiable pair at work. I know him by his marks—I will swear to his noble deeds out of a thousand."

After shaking Goody Atwood, as he usually called her, by the hand, and assuring her that she was a silly good-for-nothing old woman, to whimper at her present unexpected good fortune, he ordered the son to unlock the door of the prison-room, which being done, he
ran

ran to the prisoners, whom he found bound hand and foot, by those halters which, had they been fastened by the hand of justice, would have been placed in a more elevated part of the human body. "Gentlemen," said Partington, bowing himself almost to the ground, "teach me how to thank you;" here he began to draw the ropes harder in their knots; "teach me, I pray, how to express my thanks---my---my---sincere---est---thanks"---(here three pulls and three bows)---"for making me the---happiest---of mankind. But the load which you have taken from my mind is so heavy---so---heavy---I say"---four pulls and as many bows---"so---very heavy---that I can never hope to make a suitable return"---a grand jerk of the halters---"suitable---return---unless it were within my power to save your necks"---here many strong tugs, in succession, at the ropes, his foot on the body of one of the prisoners---"to save---I say, your necks---for the opportunity you will give me of stretching those of the worthy---very worthy---gentleman, who sent you hither. I suppose you have the honour to know Sir

GUISE—STUART” — at pronouncing the name, three enormous bends and pulls.—
“ Yes, we do,” said one of the men—“ that is, we have heard of such a gentleman.”—
“ Aye—I thought so,” replied Partington—
“ which binds me to you”—here he pulled the halters with redoubled force—“ binds me to you—for ever.”

“ Take care, master, that your own neck is not stretched, for your outrage of his majesty’s officers, in the discharge of their bounden duty,” said the other captive, almost gagged, and struggling like a lion in the toils; then lifting up the only eye which some former contest had left in his head, young Atwood would certainly have deprived him of this, had not Partington interposed, by insisting on the honest gentleman’s being permitted to *see* his way to the gallows.

Further remarks were interrupted by the appearance of the great personage, who had set these subordinate instruments to work, namely, the lawyer himself. He had come post haste from London, for many great and important purposes; amongst which, not the least

least in "his dear love," was the pure and laudable design of turning a whole innocent family into the streets, in the bitterest weather that a rigorous December ever inflicted—and that upon a mock execution instituted against them, and to be served, unless he could obtain a certain security, which was, indeed, the great object he came in search of, and of which the reader shall not die in ignorance, unless his death be very sudden indeed. This pest of the laws of England began to exhibit a specimen of the goodness of his heart the moment he entered, by demanding, whether the distress had been made, and the goods inventoried? observing, that he had not a single moment to spare; and unless he had satisfaction, must take them all into custody that very night: then seeing the instruments of his office bound, he cast his eyes about in a wild sort of surprize, and, in so doing, threw them on Partington and his associates, whom till then he had not noticed, and at the sight of whom, though he did not personally know either, his honest conscience, the only thing which even rogues cannot always bring over

as parties assenting—his honest conscience suspected, perhaps instinctively, were no friends to his cause. Partington, without speaking one syllable, and even without making his bow, a rare omission in his dealings with a knave of distinction, gave the cue to the Atwoods and Co. and zealously assisted, first in tripping up the heels, then in pinioning the arms, and, finally, in fettering the legs, of the principal, even as the legs and arms of the petty agents had been fettered and pinioned, with a slight difference only in the materials of bondage—substituting for ropes, the handkerchiefs tied together, and the garters—which were loosened in a moment—even of the afore-said agents and principals. While this ceremony was performing, Partington suggested a trifling alteration, which he thought might be an improvement, in the article of fastening—to wit, tying the prisoners neck and heels *together*, and then arranging them so close that they might enjoy the benefits of a conversation, “which, no doubt,” said he, “must be interesting, while you and I, ye scoundrels, and this old good-for-nothing whimpering woman,”

man," said Partington, pointing to Mrs. Atwood, "retire to the Bury, and consult about their future promotion. Meantime, worthy gentlemen," continued Partington, "I will, by virtue of mine office, perform the duty of searching your pockets, convinced, that I shall find nothing therein but the most unequivocal testimonies of your virtue and humanity!"

Partington's hands were ransacking the pockets of the prisoner in chief, and the Atwoods and Jonathan those of the subalterns in captivity, all the time they were thus speaking: then possessing themselves of the spoil, the parties, thus *literally bound* over to their better behaviour, were packed in the way Partington proposed. The windows were made fast, neither fire or candle allowed, every article of furniture moved out of the room, a comfortable cold brick floor was their bed; the key of the street door was then turned upon the vanquished, and the conquerors marched away, taking Goody Atwood in protection to head-quarters, at Partington-Bury.

Here, over a bottle of the best wine which Partington's cellar afforded, the victorious party examined the plunder which they had taken from the enemy. It consisted of the following interesting particulars, a commentary on which would call for a hundred pens, each of them better at description than ours, and yet, which any single person, with a heart as honest as that of Partington, Jonathan Armstrong, or the Atwoods, may furnish, as he reads. But these particulars are of too great consequence not to be given in an appropriate Chapter, nay, they shall even have the honour, on account of the *discoveries* they unfolded, to open the Fourth Volume of our FAMILY SECRETS.

END OF VOLUME THE THIRD.

ERRATA.

Page 1. line 13. *for some paces read moments.*

8. — *ult. for permits read permit.*

18. — 3. *for parents plunged him; and while read were about to plunge him, while.*

26. *for Chapter VIII. read Chapter IV.*

34. *for Chapter IX. read Chapter V.*

40. *for Chapter X. read Chapter VI.*

333. *for Chapter XXXV. read Chapter XXXIV.*



END OF VOLUME TWO THIRD.

